

## Fences

### 1 Introduction

In Mai 2011 a child in a kindergarden climbed on a crossbar of a woodfence, slipped and ended up with its head between two pickets and finally died.

Children use their whole environment for playing. Most of us remember sitting in a tree as a child or climbing over fences. Some of our friends fell down.

Such tragic events can be avoided. In some cases fences are not necessary. A hedge (without thornes) can have the same effeciency, while beeing an eye-catcher (even in wintertime) and giving shelter to animals.

### 2 Size of fences, safe, protective device

If you still want to choose a fence, it should be high enough, that children are not tempted to climb on it. It should be at least 1m high, otherwise people could stumble across it. Normally fences are 1,4m high. Since children tend to climb anywhere, fences should not have any crossbar lower than 0,70m that could be used as steps. If you consider these regulations, then this excludes the „Jägerzaun“ (trellis-work fence) or other horizontal constructions of planks, cinder blocks or similar fences.



**Foto: This trellis-work fence in front is inappropriate, because it encourages to climb, it has laces and there are head-trapping hazards (a childs head can be trapped in a square between the pickets). The wall in the background with concrete elements is also easy to climb on and it has head-trapping hazards.**

If you plan a woodfence the distance between upright pickets should not be more than 45 mm, to avoid accidents like the one we described above.



To reduce the danger of such fences you can fix a horizontal bar close to the top of the pickets (not more than 45mm below).

**Foto: this fence is inappropriate as well, because children can climb over it and a childrens head can be trapped in it. The distance must not be more than 11 cm.**

(Fotos: Uwe Schaller privat)

If preservation and historic interests don't need to be considered we suggest to use Mat fences. If they are less than 2m high, they should be installed with the laces downwards. Hedges and Flechtzäune (braided fences) as well as plastered walls can be recommended.

If you have questions, please contact us

Your occupational health and safety manager

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(elaborated by safety manager Uwe Schaller, Elim Zwickau, volunteer coworker)