

White House says playground mulch stays

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The White House says it's not replacing the rubber mulch under Sasha and Malia Obama's play set, despite health warnings from a U.S. environmental group.

The ground tire mulch was placed under the set outside the White House after consultation with the National Recreation and Park Association, said Camille Johnston, first lady Michelle Obama's communications director.

Environment and Human Health Inc., officials said an analysis of ground tires found a carcinogen as well as chemicals that irritate the skin, eyes and mucous membranes, the Chicago Tribune reported Tuesday.

The tire mulch gets very hot in the sun, releasing toxins that cause skin infections, said the group, a non-profit organization of doctors and public health professionals.

"This is not a material that children should be playing on," said Nancy Alderman, the group's president.

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