

NAFLIC

National Association For Leisure Industry Certification

Standards & Related Documents Committee

TECHNICAL BULLETIN - JUNE 2002

242. Inflatable Slide Accident

We have been informed, by NAFLIC member DMG Technical Services, of an accident that occurred on an inflatable slide in Hong Kong earlier this year. The injured person was a 3 year old girl who suffered a complex fracture to her ankle.

The girl did not reach the bottom of the slide in the conventional manner (i.e. friction stopped her before the end). However, she subsequently deliberately bounced off the apron onto the landing mat, which consisted of 25 mm energy-absorbing material. (The statements of 5 witnesses confirmed that she landed on it rather than overshooting).

Observation suggested that girls wearing skirts / dresses were less likely to slide fully to the end of the device than children in long trousers, because of friction between the fabric and bare flesh. There would then appear to be a natural temptation for a proportion of those coming to a stop to bounce off onto the mat, sometimes landing on it from a height of 1 metre or more. It is thought that bouncing off such an inflatable slide, in such circumstances, may be more common and less controllable by operator / attendants than on conventional bouncers.

The questions that arise are - Was this accident a very rare event? Is landing from heights of this magnitude onto a conventional mat likely to result in injuries? Entertainment Sheet No. 7 suggests that mats should be between 25 and 125 mm in thickness - is this a case when the greater thickness should be used?

We are seeking more information about whether injury as a result of bouncing onto a 25 mm mat is a significant or very rare issue and, if we receive any useful information, we will issue a further Technical Bulletin.

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