

NAFLIC

National Association For Leisure Industry Certification

Standards & Related Documents Committee

TECHNICAL BULLETIN - MARCH 2004

266. Idées Loisirs Formula 2000 Accident

We received information from the Health and Safety Executive, and have been able to add to this from other sources available to this Committee, about an accident in the 2003 season involving a Formula 2000 ride. The accident injured an infant girl, about 18 months old, who opened the door of one of the vehicles, the Coca-Cola wagon, while it was at a high point of the circuit. We are told that she inadvertently released the door catch and fell from a seated position.

The ride has 18 assorted "toys" with a total of 45 seats, without restraints. The "toys" may include motorbikes, "Barbie" and similar cars, locomotives, pick-up trucks, fire engines, buses, etc. The ride is sold with a suggested height limit of 900mm - the average height of a British 2-year-old.

Power failures are, of course, an occasional feature of rides and one may need to consider risks associated with passengers trying to get out if the ride remains at a standstill for some time. Furthermore, if power is not easily restored there may be a need to evacuate the vehicles in a safe manner.

One significant feature of the ride is that it has a figure of 8 layout, necessitating part of the track to be bridged over another section. There are potential fall heights of the order of 2 metres. Historically, the industry has normally expected that barriers be provided where fall heights from platforms exceed 600 mm.

When assessing risks associated with children's rides, some hazards may involve consideration of the required cognitive and physical development of those permitted to ride. This may influence the choice of passenger height limit which, in some cases, may be acting as proxy for cognitive matters. Bearing in mind the different containment details, it should be remembered that there may be a need for different height limits for the individual toys on such rides, or for an overall height limit to be not less than for the worst-case toy.

As well as setting height limits, issues that may need to be considered in relation to containment on children's rides include the need to provide restraints (or otherwise), whether to restrict the possibility of passengers standing up, and whether or not to make door latching inaccessible or tamperproof. This may again vary from toy to toy and we are reminded of the accident that occurred several years ago in which a child fell out of the back of a Jeep-type vehicle.

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