

## **Governor Snyder Declares Amusement Ride Safety Awareness Week July 1-7, 2012 Summer is in Full Swing ? It's Time to Enjoy Carnival & Amusement Parks Safely!**

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**June 29, 2012** - Governor Rick Snyder has declared July 1-7, 2012, as Amusement Ride Safety Awareness Week to encourage residents and visitors to travel Michigan and safely enjoy fairs, carnivals, amusement, and water parks this summer season.

The upcoming Fourth of July festivities puts the carnival and amusement season in full swing, so Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) Director Steven H. Hilfinger offers important safety tips to help keep families safe while having fun.

"Each year in Michigan, more than 40 million people enjoy amusement rides safely due to their use of common sense and caution while doing so. Carnival rides in Michigan are held to the highest safety standards to keep riders safe while enjoying the roller coasters and water slides" said Hilfinger. "We also ask riders to do their part and remember 'safety first', because even one injury is one too many."

Most at risk are the young. National data compiled by the Saferparks organization ([www.saferparks.org](http://www.saferparks.org)) indicates that most amusement ride accidents are suffered by children under the age of 13. The five years between ages seven and 12 account for nearly a third of all ride accidents.

Inexperience, immaturity and horseplay, when coupled with large machines, can lead to serious injury and even death. Thankfully such tragedies are rare. Nationally, the chance of an injury requiring overnight hospitalization due to injuries related to amusement rides is 1 in 9 million, but riders, parents and guardians can do much to prevent such incidents.

To reduce the chance of injury for all ages and still enjoy the ride, LARA offers these tips: Choose rides appropriate for rider abilities, sensitivities and health.

- Choose rides appropriate for rider abilities, sensitivities and health.
- Obey listed age, height, weight, and health restrictions especially those involving heart and back conditions, and pregnancies. Such restrictions were created by the ride designers and manufacturers.
- Don't put a child on a ride he's either too small or young for -- or outgrown.
- Observe and follow all posted ride safety rules and instructions about seating order or loading.
- Keep hands, arms, legs, and feet inside the ride at all times. Secure loose hair, clothing, and objects.
- Adults should never seat a child on their lap unless ride operators indicate it's safe to do so.
- Follow all verbal instructions given by ride operators or provided by recorded announcements.
- Remain seated in the ride until it comes to a complete stop and riders are instructed to exit.
- Use safety equipment provided; stay safely seated and hold on.
- Parents with children should make sure that their children can understand safe and appropriate ride behavior.
- Never force anyone on rides; don't put children on rides they're afraid of.
- If you see any unsafe behavior or conditions on a ride, report it to a ride supervisor or

- manager immediately.
- Report injuries to a ride supervisor. They will assist the injured and report the injury to LARA. Contact the LARA Amusement Safety Unit at (517) 241-9273 for more information.

LARA's Bureau of Commercial Services licenses 900 amusement rides including water slides and go-karts, carnival rides and roller coasters. The State of Michigan also licenses 220 carnivals, amusement parks, family entertainment centers and aquatic centers that operate these rides. New amusement rides for the 2012 amusement season in Michigan include a traveling European spectacular ride and a 200 foot tall swing ride.

In addition, LARA licenses 1,500 ride inspectors statewide. Amusement rides are inspected daily before operation according to manufacturer criteria, national standards and state law. Michigan is one of only two states that register the inspectors who do the daily inspections of amusement rides.

Hilfinger noted that Michigan has the oldest amusement ride safety program in the country - protecting consumers for 45 years.

"Unfortunately accidents do occur, we all need to treat amusement ride safety seriously, just like traffic safety, water safety, and bike safety" said Hilfinger. "About 30 injuries are reported to LARA annually, compared to the estimated 50 million to 100 million rides taken in Michigan each year."

The majority of amusement ride injuries results from the riders themselves and are preventable. A recent study of nearly 350 injuries reported to LARA over the last 12 years showed that 80 percent were caused by the rider's own actions. The remaining 20 percent were caused by the ride operators or failures of the equipment or a combination of both. Practicing LARA's safety tips for amusement rides will help reduce rider-caused injuries.

It is important to be aware that inflatable "bounce houses," bungee jumps and climbing walls are not regulated in Michigan. Users of these devices should use the same recommendations and be especially alert to the conditions of the device and the attentiveness of the operators.

There are many very good amusement ride safety resources for kids and adults.

Two good websites are especially for kids:

- Saferparks, "Kids Club" at [www.saferparks.org/kids\\_club/](http://www.saferparks.org/kids_club/)
- Disney, "Wild About Safety" at <http://disney.go.com/safety/>

Information for adults can be found at the following websites:

- SaferParks, Sharing Information for Safety Amusement Ride Thrills at [www.saferparks.org](http://www.saferparks.org)
- CARES (Council for Amusement and Recreational Equipment Safety) for Consumers at <http://caresofficials.org/consumers>
- Michigan Amusement Safety at [www.michigan.gov/amusement](http://www.michigan.gov/amusement)

For more information about LARA, please visit [www.michigan.gov/lara](http://www.michigan.gov/lara)

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