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PA Amusement Ride Safety Regulators Issue Findings on August 2016 Idlewild & SoakZone Park Incident
State Agriculture Department recommends operators of similar rides make improvements to meet latest safety standards

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture’s Division of Amusement Rides and Attractions today released findings from its investigation into an August 2016 incident at Idlewild and SoakZone Park in Westmoreland County where a young child was ejected from the Rollo Coaster ride.

According to Walt Remmert, director of the Bureau of Ride and Measurement Standards, “This report is intended to memorialize the details of the investigation to determine 1) if the Rollo Coaster should be allowed to reopen, and 2) if so, under what conditions, if any. This report is not intended to assign legal culpability.”

As part of the investigation, officials compiled a timeline of events along with evidence from the park and witnesses. Staff from the department reviewed inspection reports, photographs, safety training protocols, and the structural integrity of the Rollo Coaster ride, itself. The ride has not been operated for the public since the incident on Aug. 11.

Following the investigation, officials outlined four requirements in the report that Idlewild must meet before the Department of Agriculture will inspect the Rollo Coaster to determine whether it can reopen. In summary, those requirements include:

- Installing manufacturer-approved secondary passenger restraints, such as seat belts;
- Obtaining written verification from a professional engineer affirming that the ride can carry all loads safely and withstand normal stresses; the ride’s structural materials and construction conform to normal engineering practices, procedures, standards and specifications; and that the ride meets the applicable design and construction requirements of the Amusement Ride Inspection Act, state regulations, and the applicable ASTM International standards;
- Re-evaluating the rider height requirements, and consider adopting the minimum height requirement prescribed by the ride manufacturer for new roller coasters (requiring that a rider be at least 42 inches tall and that a rider under 48 inches tall be accompanied by an adult); and
- Providing the department with a written description of changes in operator training requirements to reduce the risk of an accident such as referenced above and an auditing function to ensure all operators are trained properly and are adhering to requirements.

In addition to the reopening requirements for the Rollo Coaster, the department wrote to the operators and owners of similar rides in Pennsylvania on March 1, 2017, encouraging them to make voluntary improvements that would bring those attractions in line with the most current industry standards. The department’s regulations require that a ride or attraction meet the

ASTM International standards that were in effect as of the earlier of: 1) the date of when the ride or attraction was originally contracted for manufacturing; or 2) date on which the manufacturer sold the ride to the original buyer. If the ride or attraction is later modified, however, the latest ASTM International standards apply to that change, alteration or modification.

“The ASTM International standards regarding passenger restraints have evolved over the years, and currently require redundant restraints based upon the gravitational forces to which riders are subjected,” wrote Remmert in the March letter to amusement ride owners and operators. “Although you may own or operate an amusement ride that is not *required* to meet current ASTM International standards, the department strongly recommends that you modify the ride or attraction voluntarily to bring it into compliance with the ASTM International standards regarding passenger restraints.”

The department’s report on the August 2016 Idlewild incident, as well as Remmert’s letter to the industry, is available at [online](#).

For more information on amusement ride safety in Pennsylvania, including access to owner information, date of last inspection and other related information, visit ridesafe.PA.gov.

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