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## ***Summer is Here -- It's Time to Enjoy Carnival & Amusement Parks Safely!***

**May 22, 2009** – With the holiday weekend approaching, amusement parks and traveling shows are tuning up their rides and polishing their cotton candy spinners getting ready for a summer of fun.

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm issued a proclamation declaring May 24-30, 2009, as *Amusement Ride Safety Week* to bring awareness to the state's amusement industry.

"It's carnival and amusement park season again and we want to ensure that kids of all ages are safe. The majority of accidents are due to rider error so we encourage parents to talk to kids about avoiding horseplay and other dangerous acts while enjoying rides – it's a dangerous combination," said Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth (DELEG) Director Stanley "Skip" Pruss. "The safe enjoyment of amusement rides allows Michigan's tourism industry to flourish, bringing millions of visitors each year and adding millions of dollars to our economy."

National data compiled by the Saferparks organization ([www.saferparks.org](http://www.saferparks.org)) indicate 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.

There are many reasons for this including inexperience, lack of caution and youthful exuberance which, when coupled with large machines, can lead to tragedy. Thankfully such tragedies are rare, but parents and guardians can do much to ensure they are rare.

To reduce the chance of injury for all ages and still enjoy the ride, the DELEG offers these tips:

- Choose appropriate rides. Consider the nature of the ride and the rider's abilities, sensitivities and health.
- Follow the rules; riders need to heed the age, height and weight restrictions and riding instructions. These were created by the rides' designers and manufacturers
- Secure loose clothing and objects.
- Stay seated with eyes front and hold on until the ride stops.
- Report incidents to the ride operator or contact the Amusement Safety Unit at (517) 241-9273.

(more)

## Tips for Safe Enjoyment of Amusement Rides

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Nine hundred amusement rides are licensed in Michigan including water slides and go-karts, carnival rides and roller coasters. The state also licenses 30 carnivals, 30 amusement parks, 60 family fun centers and 60 aquatic centers. New attractions are on their way to Michigan for the 2009 amusement season, including two roller coasters, five waterslides, two go-cart tracks, and nine carnival rides including one that is 100 feet tall and on which riders will travel 60 mph.

DELEG licenses more than 1,600 inspectors statewide and regulates training of the ride operators. Amusement ride riding is among the safest of activities and has long been a part of summer fun, but still injuries and risk of death can occur.

“Despite the best efforts of many people, accidents occur and on average, about 30 injuries are reported to the DELEG annually. This is a small figure considering somewhere between 50 million to 100 million rides are taken in Michigan annually. However, even one injury is too many in our opinion, so we do all we can to ensure the carnival rides are held to the highest safety standards. We also ask that riders ensure they act appropriately,” Pruss said.

The vast majority of these injuries are caused by the riders themselves and are preventable. A recent study of nearly 500 injuries reported to DELEG 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.

It is important to note 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 condition of the device and the attentiveness of the operators.

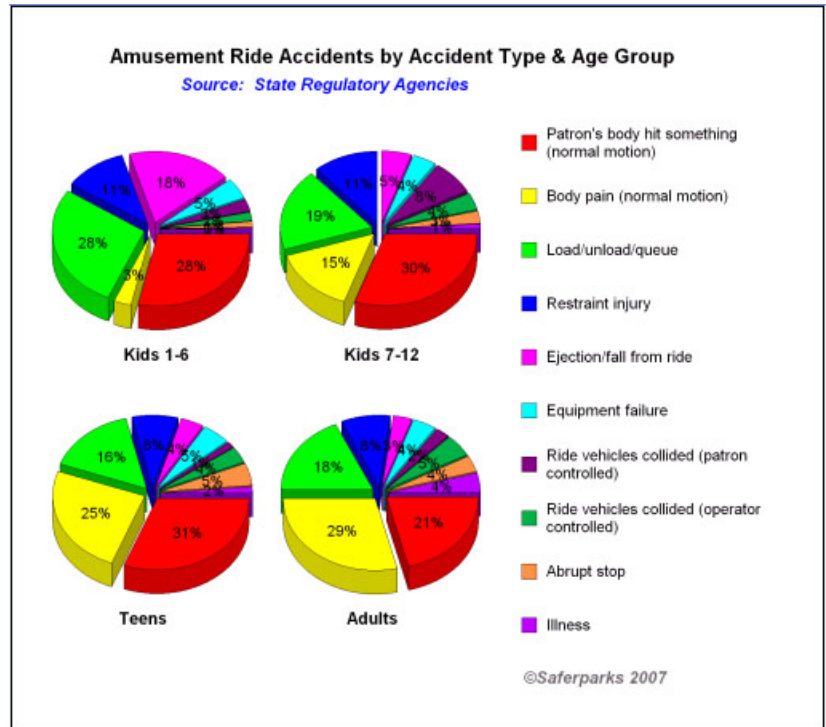
There are many very good amusement ride safety resources for kids and adults.

Two good websites are especially for kids:

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

More adult information can be found at these websites:

- SaferParks – <http://www.saferparks.org>
- IAAPA Safety Suggestions – <http://www.iaapa.org/fastfacts.asp>
- Michigan Amusement Safety – <http://www.michigan.gov/amusement>



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