

A blue-tinted background image showing various amusement park rides, including a Ferris wheel, roller coasters, and a person in a cowboy hat on a ride.

# AMUSEMENT RIDE SAFETY

A day at an amusement park or fair offers endless fun, but a tragedy can happen in an instant. The National Safety Council found that in 2018 about 1,300 people were injured while riding a fixed-site [amusement ride](#) in the United States and Canada. Some injuries may be unpreventable, but many can be avoided by following safety guidelines, observing ride activity and understanding how personal situations can affect the ride.

## AMUSEMENT RIDE SAFETY

Below are some tips that everyone should follow regardless of age or special conditions.

- Read all posted rules and listen to instructions given by the ride's operator.
- Keep hands, arms, legs and feet inside the ride at all times.
- Secure all clothing and personal possessions such as cell phones, hats, sunglasses and wallets.
- A person of extreme height or weight size should pay close attention to all posted signs. If there is difficulty sitting in any seat properly, do not stay on that ride.
- Always use all the safety equipment provided (seat belt, shoulder harness, lap bar, etc.).
- Remain in the ride until it comes to a complete stop at the unloading point. If a ride stops temporarily due to mechanical failure or other reasons, stay seated and wait for an operator to provide further instructions.
- Don't board a ride if there are broken parts, signs of improper maintenance or an inattentive operator. Immediately call the IDHS Amusement Ride Hotline at 1-888-203-5020 to report this information.
- Every ride should have a prominently displayed, current permit issued by IDHS. The permit is about the size of a business card and is typically located at the operator's station. Permits are good for one year. If the ride has no such permit, or if the permit has expired, call the IDHS Amusement Ride Hotline at 1-888-203-5020 to report this information.
- Understand physical conditions and limitations. If personal health could be at risk for any reason, or a pre-existing condition of any kind could be aggravated, do not board the ride.

## **RIDES AND CHILDREN**

Do not put children on rides if they show extreme fear. The child could attempt to escape the ride, which would cause serious safety issues.

- Watch the ride while operating before boarding with children. Point out the operator and the entrance and exit locations prior to riding. Make sure they understand the instructions and warnings fully.
- Tell children to hold on tightly with both hands to lap bars, handholds or any other item designed specifically for hand placement. Explain this reduces the risk of injury.
- Obey minimum height, age and weight restrictions. Never sneak children onto rides they are too small or too young for because they may not be physically or developmentally able to stay safely seated.
- If children cannot be trusted to stay seated with hands and feet inside, do not let them ride.
- Load children to the inside, away from open doorways or on the side closest to the ride operator. Some rides will have very specific requirements.
- Explain to children that although rides sometimes stop temporarily, they should not get off until the operator says to unload. Tell them not to exit the ride while it's still in motion.

## **PATRONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Amusement facilities are making strides in inclusivity, but it's not always possible to include everybody. The forces exerted by some amusement rides or devices can be dangerous to a rider who cannot maintain the posture required for that ride.

- Upon entering an amusement facility, a guest with a disability should visit an information desk and request any information regarding access to the rides.
- Ask about specific amusement rides before someone with a disability is placed on the ride. Some rides can be too much for the person to handle mentally or physically. Operators can answer most questions about specific details of the ride.
- Many amusement rides and attractions have rapidly flashing lights that could cause a seizure.
- If someone is showing signs of distress before the ride begins, notify the operator and have the person get off the ride. A distressed person could attempt to escape during the ride, which would cause serious safety hazards.