

SAFETY BULLETIN

GO-KART REAR AXLE ENTANGLEMENT ALERT



GO-KART REAR AXLE SAFETY

REAR AXLE ENTANGLEMENT & STRANGULATION EXPOSURE

While the go-kart industry has been a great source of entertainment for enthusiasts around the world for decades and decades, a new safety exposure is drawing serious attention. The rear axle entanglement and strangulation exposure has become perhaps the most hazardous go-kart safety concern occurring when a patron's hair, or loose clothing, becomes caught in a rotating component of the go-kart, in most cases involving the rear axle/drive system. Significant injuries and even fatalities have occurred on go-karts when hair longer than shoulder length, or loose clothing items such as scarves, become entangled in the rear axle of a go-kart.

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GO-KART INSPECTIONS

Inspect all go-karts to ensure no moving parts are exposed, specifically, the rear axle and drive system (drive belt and pulley system). Additionally, ensure the rear tires have fenders, or a guard, in place.

CONSULT WITH THE GO-KART MANUFACTURER

Contact the go-kart manufacturers to request copies of any relevant safety bulletins and manufacturer recommendations for all go-kart models operated at your Family Entertainment Center. Provide each manufacturer with your facility's contact information to ensure you will receive future safety bulletins and manual updates.

ADHERENCE TO ASTM STANDARDS

It is important that operators of go-karts are very familiar with ASTM standards, specifically, ASTM F2007-12 Standard Practice of Design, Manufacture, and Operation of Concession Go-Karts and Facilities. Section 5.9 of ASTM F2007 - 12 states, "Concession Go-karts shall have protective covers or component placement for moving or heated components of the engine, and drive train system, to inhibit driver or passenger from inadvertent contact with these components while seated in the intended position for operation and while properly restrained."

WARN PATRONS OF THE RISK

Family Entertainment Centers should have the proper signage in place to inform patrons of the safety rules and warn them of the specific safety exposures. ASTM F2007-12 6.10.1.3 calls out the importance of instructional signage with regards to securing long hair and loose clothing when riding go-karts. Signage conveying this information should be in place at the following areas:

- Point of sale locations
- At the front of the go-kart queue line
- In the pit area and
- Inside each go-kart

All safety signage should be high profile, readily visible, and consistent with industry standards.

In addition to safety signage, the use of an audible repeater is a great tool to ensure your safety message is being delivered repeatedly and effectively to your guests. An audible repeater plays a custom message to patrons while waiting in the pit or queue area (usually communicating the safety spiel/boarding requirements). The message would play on a continuous loop, or at programmed intervals, during the loading/unloading of go-karts. If you have an audible repeater communicating safety rules, it is strongly recommended that the requirement to secure long hair and loose clothing be included in the repeated message.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

The cornerstone of any safety program involves a comprehensive employee training program. Go-kart attendants should be held accountable to the highest standard of safety. Your employees are your first and last line of defense in minimizing risks and ensuring safe operation of your park's go-karts. While signage is important, attendants should always include in their personal safety spiel to each patron the need to properly secure hair above the shoulders and discard any loose clothing. Many facilities offer hair ties for patrons with long hair. However, it is up to go-kart attendants to enforce that a patron's hair is properly secured and at a safe length before they are allowed to ride.

Attendants must always maintain constant vigilance of the track to watch for unsafe behavior and unsafe situations. It is critical that attendants are trained to continuously watch for unsecured hair and loose clothing throughout the entire ride cycle as a part of their surveillance. If an attendant identifies an unsafe condition such as a rider's hair tie blowing off, or a scarf coming loose, they need to be able to quickly activate the Kart Commander to stop a kart as soon as possible to inform the rider to secure their hair or clothing.

CONCLUSION

The rear axle entanglement and strangulation exposure is a serious risk. To reduce the exposure's opportunity for serious and potentially fatal incidents, go-kart operators should conduct a thorough inspection of all go-karts for the entanglement exposure and reach out to the manufacturer to secure approved shielding/guarding. In addition, go-kart operators should ensure that their attendants warn patrons of the risk, maintain constant vigilance of the track when go-karts are in operation, and be trained to quickly and properly respond if they observe any entanglement exposures.

If you or your staff have any questions concerning the go-kart rear axle entanglement and strangulation exposure, please contact us today regarding this important safety measure.



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