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HSE information note – water rides

The Health and Safety Executive has issued an information note relating to water rides following the death of a young girl on Drayton Manor Theme Park’s Splash Canyon river rapids attraction.

In a covering note, the HSE states that its “investigation into the death of a child at Drayton Manor is continuing. During our investigation if any specific matter regarding the safety of water rides is found that requires action by those operating similar rides, we will ensure we inform everyone promptly. In the meantime, we would like to remind operators of water rides of their duties generally and the measures they should have in place to ensure these can be operated safely.” (See accompanying note).

The HSE also points out that none of the issues referred to in the note should be read as causative in connection with the death at Drayton Manor.

Committee Members: Mr. D Dadswell (Chairman), Mr. A Mellor (Secretary), Mr. P Smith, Mr. J Green, Mr. D Cox, Mr. M Thirkettle, Mr. I Davies, Mr. J Shilling & Mr. D Inman

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HSE Information Note

Safety at water rides

People can get into difficulties on fairground rides for a variety of reasons; this is foreseeable, well documented and the risk of serious harm is heightened if the ride experience includes deep and/or moving water. Ride controllers have duties to take reasonably practicable steps to ensure the safety of people on their rides. On water rides HSE expects that:

- Given that incidents can happen anywhere on a ride, operators are both able to, and do, actively monitor the whole of the ride at all times, either by direct sight or via effective CCTV or similar.
- Operators should give clear, unambiguous advice and instructions about safety on the ride before riders board/during boarding.
- Operators should be able to identify individual boats and quickly address any emerging problems, firstly through PA systems or similar.
- If a person enters the water, the operator should raise the alarm immediately and staff should be deployed without delay to the correct part of the ride to effect rescue.
- Operators will have identified and taken action to eliminate, control or manage any additional hazards which may increase the risk of drowning or impede rescue in the event of a rider entering into the water.
- Any theming or participatory items such as water cannons or similar items whether on the boat or the bank, should not encourage riders to adopt unsafe positions.
- Suitable and sufficient equipment is readily available along the ride so that rescue can be effected.

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