

Park Law

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Ride Attendant Training Tips

Ride attendant and operator training is integral to the safe operation of every amusement venue. Of course, ride operators and attendants are typically training using the ride manufacturer's specifications and procedures for operating of the ride. However, while certainly not "industry standard" or otherwise required, there could be training on a couple of points beyond the training required by manufacturers that can help make your guests' experience more comfortable, enjoyable, or safer.

First, are riders required to wear footwear on all of your hard attractions? Many parks have a ride-by-ride policy where footwear is typically required but a guest in footwear that cannot be fully secured on the foot – such as flip flops – must be removed before riding. Thus, you may end up with some guests in footwear, but others are barefoot. In the event of the unfortunate need for an emergency evacuation, those barefoot guests could have a more difficult time traversing evacuation routes, which often include narrow ladders or catwalks. Consider enforcing a park-wide requirement for footwear that can be secured on the foot. While flip flops are certainly popular in the warmer months, guests can still wear sandals – with straps – to maintain comfort without compromising safety. Ride attendants would be trained to enforce this policy at hard ride entrances.

Second, consider training your ride attendants to look for signs of distress in guests as they prepare to board your rides. It is not uncommon for guests, particularly in a group of peers, to feel pressured to go on an attraction with which they're really not comfortable. Make sure your rides are all clearly marked with the "thrill level" the rider should expect to experience on each attraction and urge potential riders to watch the ride in operation before just jumping on. This will allow each guest to make an informed decision on whether to ride an attraction that may be a bit too "high thrill" for him. With training of ride attendants to look for basic signs of distress and make a simple inquiry of a guest thought to be too fearful or apprehensive (i.e., crying, screaming, or appearing faint before ride dispatch), the guest can be offered exit from the ride. Of course, ride attendants are not mental health providers and cannot be expected to interpret body language or other non-obvious indicators of distress or fear. But, by at least noting those which are obvious and initiating an offer to the upset guest to avoid riding, this may well reduce the number of guest illnesses and shutdowns for clean up, guest embarrassment, and perhaps even injuries.

Again, these suggestions are certainly not intended to convey standards for operation. Rather, they are intended as food for thought that could improve the guest experience at your park. In all instances, training should comply with manufacturer's specifications and applicable law and standards.



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