

# Keeping children safe on fairgrounds

Taking children to the fair is a great experience that has been enjoyed by families for generations. The music, the sweet taste of the candyfloss and the thrill of the rides can make for an unforgettable day. But how can you be sure your children are safe? A trip to the fair is in fact a very safe activity. You are actually more likely to be injured travelling to the fair than at it.

Nevertheless modern fairground rides can be large, powerful and capable of carrying many passengers. They will let riders experience combinations of height, acceleration and multiple, quick changes of direction not normally to be had elsewhere in normal life so certain checks have to be made to ensure their safety. Fairground rides have to be designed, manufactured and reviewed to ensure their safety before they even come into use. Once in use they have to have an annual inspection just like an MOT.

These all have to be carried out by people who have the knowledge, experience, qualifications and competence to be able to do this work. The Amusement Devices Inspection Procedures Scheme (ADIPS) maintains a register of ride examiners who have been through a thorough vetting and induction scheme to ensure they fit these criteria.

The rides should also of course be operated in a safe manner by those in control of them.

Well maintained and operated rides are essential for ensuring the safety of riders. There are also a few simple things you can do to make sure your family have a good time at the fair and get home again without problems.

- Organised fairgrounds will normally be run by a person belonging to a member of a recognised trade association such as the Showman's Guild of Great Britain (SGGB) or British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions (BALPPA) who will require all rides to be tested and hold a current certificate to prove this. Ride operators will generally have a copy of their certificate to hand which they can show you if asked.
- Take a look at the machines. Do they look solid, clean, tidy and well presented? A poorly turned out machine is more likely to be poorly maintained.
- Watch the attendants. Do they look as if they are doing their jobs properly and efficiently? Are they checking restraints are in place? Are they keeping an eye on what is happening while the machine is running?
- Take note of safety warnings. Fences and exclusion zones are there to keep you away from the dangers of fast moving machinery. Keep an eye on young children who may want to get closer than may be safe.

- Don't try to 'beat' height restrictions. These are in place because the seats are designed to hold people of certain sizes in the machine. If riders are too big, too small, too thin etc they may be ejected from the machine and get seriously hurt.
- Impress on your children the need to sit still. Turning, kneeling, standing etc all take riders out of the seat where they are safe. Make sure they wear belts if they are fitted in the ride.

Fairground operators know what they should be doing to manage the risks on their machines. With parents playing their part too there is no reason why children should not enjoy the fair without incident.

Have a great time!