



HB 381 Amusement Ride Safety

Sponsor: Rep. Val Potter

Senate Sponsor: Sen. Curt Bramble

Utah is one of only six states in the US that does not require some type of safety inspection on amusement rides operated in the state.

This bill will require that fixed site and portable amusement rides coming into the state have a required ride inspection done, as well as providing verification of insurance and requiring that serious accidents or death are reported to the state.

What this bill does:

- Creates the Utah Amusement Ride Safety Committee within the Department of Transportation
- Provides for the appointment of a director of the Utah Amusement Rides Safety Committee.
- Provides for establishing safety standards for amusement rides.
- Allows for the certification of third-party qualified safety inspectors to perform inspections.
- Require rules & standards developed by ASTM F24 and nationally recognized amusement ride standards.
- Require liability insurance coverage.
- Require reporting and shutdown for certain injuries.

The Goal of this bill is to ensure the safe operation of all amusement rides in the state of Utah, and therefore the safety of the citizen who pay to enjoy these rides.

Nationwide

According to the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), 44 states regulate amusement parks to some extent. The states that do not regulate amusement parks are Alabama, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. Some states, like Arizona and Idaho, have very little by way of regulation, while states like Texas and Oregon have more comprehensive regulatory frameworks. The regulation of permanent amusement park rides is left to the states, and is inconsistent. The stringency of inspection regulations and which entity oversees those inspections vary across the country. In some states it is the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Insurance, or the local building inspector.

Elements of Regulation

The IAAPA developed what they consider to be elements of effective state regulation, such as:

- Incorporation of ASTM Committee F24 Standards by reference, with a mechanism for regular update to catch revisions;
- Operational inspection by a qualified inspector (PE or NAARSO Level 1);
- Post-incident investigation by qualified investigators (PE or NAARSO Level 1);
- Reporting deaths or serious injuries to the state; and
- Appropriate funding to ensure regulatory programs have the money to be carried out.

Oversight

Deficiencies in states' oversight of amusement parks vary. States' oversight may or may not encompass traveling carnivals, county fairs, temporary amusement parks, or fixed-site parks. Regulation may include physical inspection by state or park officials, or only a state audit of records of park conducted inspections.

Injury

A 2013 study by the Nationwide Children's Hospital, a pediatric health care and research center found that from 1990 to 2010, 92,885 children under 18 were treated in U.S. emergency rooms for amusement ride-related injuries, or on average, 4,423 per year. More than 70% of those injuries were in the summer months of May through September, for an average of 20 injuries per year. The study found that head and neck injuries were the most common (28%), followed by arms (24%), face (18%), and legs (17%). Soft-tissue injuries were also the most common (29%), followed by strains and sprains (21%), cuts (20%), and broken bones (10%).

An IAAPA survey of amusement ride-related injuries, a voluntary effort of its fixed-site parks, showed a decrease in ride-related injuries from 2,044 in 2003 to 1,150 in 2014. The attendance-based injury rate also fell from 7 per million attendees in 2003 to 3.8 per million attendees in 2014. The majority of the 2014 injuries occurred in family and adult rides (58%), followed by roller coasters (33%) and children's rides (8%).