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Roller Coaster Accident Injuries and Amusement Park Safety

Roller coasters and amusement parks are traditionally associated with summertime fun for children, adults, and families. Amusement parks market and advertise themselves as places to escape and enjoy the thrills of exhilarating roller coasters, twirling rides, and water park slides.

Millions of people visit amusement parks and ride roller coasters without incidents, however each year thousands are injured during such visits. Tragically, some visitors never leave an amusement park or water park alive.

Types of Roller Coaster Accidents and Amusement Parks Injuries

Amusement park injuries can result from roller coasters accidents, riders being stuck on rides like [Ferris wheels](#) , and swinging and spinning rides that somehow malfunction. In addition, people can be injured on water rides, water slides, in wave pools, and 'lazy river' rides using inflatable devices.

One [study](#) for the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) found that in the six year period from 1997 to 2003, an estimated 2,800 to 4,300 non-occupational emergency-room-treated injuries occurred on mobile amusement rides, defined as rides that are part of a traveling carnival, rented for an event, or used at a mobile amusement park, but not part of fixed location like Walt Disney World or Six Flags.

The CPSC also reported 55 deaths associated with both fixed-site and mobile amusement rides from 1987 to 2001.

Serious injuries associated with amusement parks can include:

- **Deadly Falls** - Amusement park riders can die in deadly falls, or after being thrown from rides.
- **Carotid Artery Dissection (CAD) and Stroke** - This injury involves a tear to the arteries in a person's neck, often resulting in stroke. A roller coaster's vigorous jerking of an amusement park rider's neck can potentially lead to a [CAD injury](#) and [stroke](#) for the rider.
- **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** - [Roller-coaster riders can suffer subdural hematomas](#) , or bleeding on the brain, potentially due to the incredible G-forces and stresses that can be imposed on veins in the riders' brains. Equipment that become separated from a malfunctioning ride can also strike riders and cause head injuries.
- **Brain Aneurysms** - Children and adults have the [potential to suffer a brain aneurysm](#) while on roller coasters and other fast-moving amusement park rides.
- **Paralysis** - This can be related to the [occurrence of a stroke](#) suffered by an amusement park rider.
- **Drowning** - Wave pool drowning and drowning in negligently-supervised amusement park swimming pools.
- **Inflatable Ride Injuries**
- **Lacerations, Broken Bones and Torn Ligaments** - Injuries can be internal as well as external.
- **Emotional Injuries and Distress** - Roller coasters accidents and malfunctioning theme park rides that leave riders stranded can also inflict emotional injuries, distress, and mental anguish upon park riders.

Roller Coaster Accident Dangers and Amusement Park Risks

Like any business, amusement parks have the potential to operate defective equipment. Doors, lap bars, and shoulder harnesses restraining riders [can malfunction](#) .

Employees operating amusement park rides and working at water parks can also fail to perform routine safety checks, become distracted from performing their assigned job duties, fail to safely operate a ride, properly supervise colleagues responsible for ride safety, or fail to use a reasonable standard of care that should be used on the job.

Head, neck, and back injuries are reportedly the **most commonly reported** amusement park injuries. Amusement park goers can also suffer serious go-kart and bumper-car injuries involving crashes with other riders.

Water parks and amusement parks with water rides also increase risks for water slide injuries, **wave. pool drowning deaths**, and 'lazy river' injuries experienced by riders traveling on inner tubes or other inflatable devices.

Some states like Florida **do not require** theme parks to report injuries unless they involve fatalities, or an injured rider is immediately hospitalized for at least 24 hours for more than just observation by medical personnel.

An investigation conducted by the *Orlando Sentinel* found that out of 477 personal injury lawsuits filed against area theme park operators over a 5-year period, none of the cases ever went before a jury. All except 3 cases that were settled for less than \$25,000 apiece and involved confidentiality agreements prohibiting the parties from discussing details of the alleged injuries, experiences on rides, and any monetary awards.

The theme parks told the newspaper that they do not discuss ride-related litigation.

Medical Treatment and Roller Coaster Accidents and Amusement Park Injuries

Long-term treatment and physical therapy for amusement park ride and water park injury victims may be an important part of any recovery.

Dealing with radical life changes, including new limitations on mobility, paralysis, limb amputation, scarring or disfigurement may also be part of any recovery for amusement park ride and water park injury victims.

Physical injury is only one aspect of amusement park-related trauma. The mental traumas that ride victims can experience may be just as great, if not greater, than any physical harm they suffer. Such trauma or disability may require extended, even lifelong treatment.

Roller Coaster Accidents, Amusement Park Injuries and Water Park Dangers: Your Legal Rights

While some states regulate amusement parks rides, there is still **no federal law** on amusement park safety.

If you or a loved one were injured at an amusement park, carnival ride, or water park, you may be entitled to compensation for current and future expenses, as well as special legal damages, also known as punitive damages.

Some of the legal factors that an attorney can review with you include:

- Whether you and your loved ones may be entitled to compensation for current and future medical and treatment expenses;
- If you worked at an amusement park or water park when you were injured, whether you and your loved ones can recover lost wages from work, and other out-of-pocket expenses stemming from any injuries; and
- Whether amusement park and water park injuries may entitle you and your loved ones to recover damages for pain and suffering.

Safety Tips

Before allowing children, family and friends to enter a ride in an amusement park or water park, make sure they understand and observe these safety tips:

- If the ride operators do not seem concerned about passenger safety, or they appear preoccupied with something else, do not board the ride.
- Before the ride commences, make sure the ride's seat belts, harnesses or restraints lock snugly when secured. If it does not, signal for the operator to assist you.
- Never stand up or extend your arms, hands, legs, feet, or other body parts while on the ride. You can potentially injure yourself and others, as well.
- Keep hair snugly in place. Long hair should be securely tied back or tucked in before the ride commences.
- Keep glasses snugly in place with an eyeglass strap, or remove them.
- Remove hats.
- Follow all posted rules about height, age, and weight restrictions for riders.
- Immediately report anything that concerns you about an amusement park ride or water park activity. If you are concerned about a safety issue, chances are probably very good that the park operator should also be worried.

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