



Risk Management Considerations for Portable Waterslide and Water Features Safety

Water slides, play structures and spray features are the trend in newer indoor/outdoor aquatic facilities. There are a number of issues to consider when designing, installing and maintaining these water features.

Recommendations for the Safe Operation of Water Slides:

- Each owner/operator must have a copy of the Manufacturer's Operating Instructions for each slide operated.
- Specific water slide operational policies and procedures with pertinent information from the manufacturer (including dispatch procedures) should be implemented.
- Each patron should be informed of the proper rider position.
- There should be established dispatch time intervals for each waterslide.
- There should be an established communication system between the slide attendant and lifeguard positioned at the landing area.
- Signage for safety, warning and instruction shall be posted and reflect any manufacturer recommendations.
- Signage shall be prominently displayed at the slide entrance and/or other appropriate areas.
- Instructional signage should include proper riding position, expected conduct, dispatch procedures, exiting procedures, and inform patrons to obey all staff instructions. Water depth of the landing zone should also be expressed.
- Signage notifying that riders being free of medical conditions, including but not limited to pregnancy and heart, back, or musculo-skeletal problems, maximum/minimum height and weight, and any swimming or physical ability requirement, or both shall also be posted.
- Each owner/operator should have an inspection and maintenance program that is based on the manufacturer's recommendations.
- The inspection and maintenance program should include maintenance, testing, and inspections that provide for the duties and responsibilities necessary to care for the waterslide/water feature, safety equipment, and the slide facilities.

- Visual checks of safety signs, slide entry, flume, run out, landing pool, and structural components, water flow and landing pool water level should be conducted according to manufacturer's specifications and documented.
- Do steps and platforms have handrails and vertical bars to prevent falls?
- Are all steps, platforms and walking surfaces of a non-slip area?

Considerations for Water Slide, Water Features and Life Guarding

- Water slides should have a gate to secure the slide from unauthorized use.
- Personal Flotation devices (PFDs) should be available in a variety of sizes and be fitted to each child by a responsible adult.
- A "Parental Supervision Policy" should be clearly posted at the entrance. (example: all children under the age of 12 years must be actively supervised by an adult in the pool area, at all times. Unsupervised children will be removed from the pool area.)
- Aquatic facilities (both indoor and outdoor) greatly reduce the risk of drowning and incidents when they enforce layers of protection. Layers of protection include: active parental supervision, use of PFDs, swim testing and banding, use of manufacturer's recommendations and adequate lifeguard supervision.

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