



FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES:

Go-Karts

OVERVIEW:

These guidelines cover self-driven go-kart rides at commercial endeavors (Six Flags, Malibu Grand Prix) that have well-maintained vehicles traveling less than 50 MPH on enclosed tracks. It does not include homemade karts, using go-karts on streets or other unrestricted locations, high speed indoor mini-racers, or other situations other than as defined above.

KEY INJURIES ARE:

State accident logs show that injuries are more common on go-karts, waterslides, bumper cars, and other amusement rides where patrons control the action.

There were 10,000 go-kart injuries of 5-14 year olds treated at emergency rooms in 2000, and about half of them occurred in an amusement park. Most children injured on go-karts are males over the age of 8. The most common cause of injury was collision with a stationary object or moving vehicle. 3/4 of the operators injured in collision accidents were first-time drivers. The most common injuries (81%) were lacerations, concussions, internal injuries, and fractures.

The three main hazards are collisions, loss of stability (rolling), and falling out. The 8-12 age group can be the most dangerous. At this age, they are asserting their independence, and they are responding to peer pressure. They are more likely to be operating at the edge of their ability. The 13-18 age group is better able to control a go-kart, and under good supervision, stunt driving and other dangerous practices can be curtailed.

BEFORE THE TRIP:

1. Verify that there is an adult-student ratio of at least 1:10. If you are at an amusement park that has other rides, be sure that there is one adult for every 10 riders at the track, but no less than 2.
2. Check with the park to find out the age and size limits for riders, along with any other restrictions. Each park is different, depending on the go-kart and the track.
3. If you are at an amusement park, read the safety guidelines for that activity as well as this one.
4. Don't wear loose, flowing clothing that can get caught on things.

DURING THE TRIP:

1. Watch a few runs around the track before riding yourself. Familiarize yourself with the course and the characteristics of the go-karts.
2. Check for slippery spots on the track. Go-karts should not leak fluids, but they might. If there is any wet spots on the track, alert the operator, and don't ride until it has been cleaned up.
3. Have at least one adult watch from the sidelines, and at least one adult on the track.
4. Make sure the helmet fits you properly. Adjust it if needed. Long hair can catch in moving parts. Make sure hair longer than shoulder length is properly secured.
5. There may be a mix of ages and driving abilities. Be well aware of the drivers on the track with you, and watch what they are doing.
6. Stay away from reckless drivers.

7. You will find a wide range of driving behaviors on a go-kart track. This factor will not be much different than driving on any public highway. Some drivers will be aggressive and others passive. Go-Kart drivers' tailgate, cut drivers off, but unlike the highway, some will even bump and hit other go-karts much like they do when driving "bumper cars." The attention of the go-kart track operator is essential to a safe operation. Experience has taught us that unchecked aggressive driving behavior by a patron is a contributing factor in many accidents.
8. Keep your hands and feet in the kart at all times.
9. If you get stuck in the kart on the track, stay in the kart. It is the safest place to be on the track.