

# مينالاك MENALAC

## LET'S TALK SAFETY

MARCH 2021



## WATERPARK SAFETY – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### GENERAL

Waterparks and themed parks are all about fun and entertainment for the public and have rides and attractions which are designed to test one's nerve and skill. On the outside parks – especially water parks in this article, strive to show a glossy veneer for the general public that entices all parties to come and try out the rides. They have something for everyone, young and old alike and give of the aura of being a safe place to come and spend the day. To maintain this image a lot of hard work is constantly being carried out behind the scenes.

### RULES, POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND REGULATION

A well organized water park will ensure that it has an operations manual which has been tried and tested with health and safety being a main theme through the whole manual, through the use of risk assessments, standard operating procedures, safe system of works and training of the staff. The team will be up to date with the latest incidents from other parks round the world and will look to see that they learn from these incidents. The operations team are experienced and ensure that the level of experience and maturity with the team is maintained. The maturity described here is having the wherewithal to manage all incidents and to make the right decision should an incident of whatever nature occur within the park. Having prominently displayed rules around a park helps to encourage guests to know and understand the do's and don'ts and will also help the teams on the ground, should a guest transgress them and have an accident as a result. Your message should start at the beginning of the customer journey with your website, and all the rules and safety points should be on



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your signage starting from your main entrance and continuing through all your natural choke points for the rides where guest will be standing so the rules can be read. Use of pictograms to denote what is safe as well as having the rules in the main spoken languages of the area. These plus the operation team's knowledge and expertise help manage the guests 'when at play.'

The policies for the park again can be gleaned from the industry leaders and then checked to see if it would fit 'your park'; adjust and adapt where necessary. It is suggested that there is

no 'one size fits all' for any park and with that comes the procedures. Procedure and protocol need to be realistic and ideally, they need to be generated by the operations team themselves. Who else would be better suited to produce the procedures.

Regulation has a huge part in providing governance to the industry - both local and international regulation and following of the same is a must have for any water park. Not only does the following of all your local regulations give your team an opportunity to be following best practice, it also acts as a spur for training of staff, amending procedures and for ensuring that the rides are safe in themselves through an audit process. If the regulations are followed, then surely the water park is safe? Having staff trained to the right technical level and the rides audited by a regulator approved auditor really helps push the waterpark down the correct path, but it is the people and how they operate that then ensures that the park is at its safest.

### **STRONG HEALTH AND SAFETY CULTURE WITHIN THE PARK**

Professionalism, experience and the right managerial ethos are a huge factor in ensuring that a water park is run in a safe manner. It cannot be understated how important it is for the management of a water park to ensure that all their staff have the same ethos with regards safety of the guests and the staff within the park. This is garnered by how the operations team is managed daily to ensure that all have that level of responsibility in how they act and how they look after the guests and how the infrastructure of the park is maintained. Your teams should all know that their role is always as a contributor towards the bigger machine that is the



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waterpark itself. As mentioned earlier, the softer elements such as training and relevant briefings across all departments are vital and should be part of daily 'life in the waterpark', to continually brief your teams on the importance of how the guests are managed – be it queuing for a ride, a ride breakdown to how to react in a serious incident. The measure of the professionalism of a well-managed water park will be on how these tried and tested routines work when put under stress.



### MAINTENANCE OF THE PARK

It could be said that the ultimate safety of the park is in the hands of the chief engineer - and that would not be far from the truth. Making sure that the park is fit for purpose and ready for guests is a 24/7 task, relentless and most do not see what occurs behind the scenes.

The design and structure of a waterpark or new rides within an existing park is a key factor and with that the decision of whether to use a well-known and recognized manufacturer in the industry or to opt for a more budget friendly option with a shorter or less known track record. Using a well-known manufacturer gives peace of mind and from a technical perspective no doubt adheres to local regulatory requirements and more importantly international standards. From a safety viewpoint profit versus loss is key with regards to what risk will the park have when operational? From a practical viewpoint, involving the park management in the planning and implementation of new rides is critical to ensure that they can be maintained safely. A safe and professionally managed park will be able to demonstrate a proper planned preventative management system that looks at all aspects of the rides; not only for maintenance but also ensuring that it lines up with any inspection regime required of it by a regulator. Investment made on the engineering management system of the park will ensure that predictive condition maintenance can also occur enabling the engineer to know when items such as pumps or impellers require to be changed.

The comment of 'profit versus loss' is significant because for a park to be safe then the financial spend on the maintenance has to be correct and managed appropriately. A park that scrimps



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and saves on the maintenance – cuts corners – will inevitably see more breakdowns on rides, a rise in customer dissatisfaction and potentially a rise in guest accidents. If the management mindset is thus, then the safety of that park is already compromised.

### IMPROVEMENTS TO A WATERPARK

For improvement to occur the management of the park need to have regular review meetings be it Managerial reviews or safety meetings

and these should include all recent incidents and how they were handles. These meetings demonstrate the management commitment to the safe operation of the water park. Managerial reviews can be used to ensure that the staff are given appropriate and timely training with one eye being on the latest in techniques and technology in the industry as well as best practice within the industry. Safety reviews will demonstrate the commitment to ensuring that the park is safe, and that safety is taken seriously because accidents are checked with regards causation and the next steps that need to occur.

The logical onset is that these meetings then act as a focal point and kick start for the following areas – do we need to change an operational procedure, is further training required, maybe disciplinary action - is there an engineering issue to be resolved? Finally, but not least, involvement of the staff with regards ideas and suggestions for better safety within the park should be used. The staff see the issues in the park before anyone else and who better than these staff to come up with likely and realistic solutions which then makes them feel that they are also part of the solution process.

*Article contributed by Mr. Grahame Campbell, Director of HSE, HSE Department, Jumeirah Beach Hotel & Wild Wadi Waterpark*

The advice shared above is based on a high-level view of best practice when implementing of Waterpark Safety. It is however important that you speak with and follow the recommendations of the local authorities and regulations in the countries that you operate. Their guidelines will help you to create your own Operating Procedures, Staff Training Plan and documentation to ensure your waterpark safety measures meet the requirements of your individual country, the regulations and recommendations of your local authorities.