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FACT SHEET

Amusement Park Accessibility

Introduction

As spring and summer approach, many families begin to talk about their vacation plans. Often, these plans include a visit to one of the more than 400 amusement parks and attractions in the U.S.

Although designed for fun and excitement, a trip to an amusement park can be challenging and frustrating for someone with limb loss. Each year, the Amputee Coalition's National Limb Loss Resource Center receives reports from people with limb loss about parks denying them access to rides and other attractions. Some individuals report being ordered off a ride even after they have been seated.

It is best to be informed about the park's ride rules before you arrive at an amusement park. You have spent your hard-earned vacation time and money to get there; the last thing you want is to be disappointed. This fact sheet will provide you with information on what to consider, as a person with limb loss, before including an amusement park as part of your vacation plans.

Know Before You Go

All recreation facilities in the U.S. are mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA is a comprehensive civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. The ADA requires that newly constructed and altered state and local government facilities, places of public accommodation and commercial facilities are readily accessible to and functional for individuals with disabilities. The ADA Accessibility Guidelines establish the standard applied to buildings and facilities. Recreational facilities, including amusement park rides, are required to comply with the ADA.

Although all amusement parks are mandated to comply with the ADA, it is important to note that individual state laws and the manufacturers of each ride provide regulations for a ride's accessibility standards. These guidelines are what amusement parks use to determine who may ride the rides. You can see examples of the varying restrictions as you make your way through the park. Ride restrictions are based on height and size requirements (as often displayed by the "You must be this tall to ride this ride" sign). Amusement parks may also use these guidelines to require riders to remove medical devices, including prosthetic devices. These devices may prevent safety restraints from working as designed, which can keep the rider from maintaining proper riding posture, and present a hazard to the individual or other riders.

The best way to avoid frustration or discomfort at the park is to do some research on the park's policies before you plan your trip. Most amusement parks have detailed information about park policies and the accessibility of their rides available on their websites. Parks will outline any restrictions of wearing prosthetic devices on each ride. You will often find this type of information in the "Plan Your Visit," "Accessibility," "Guests With Disabilities" or "Frequently Asked Questions"

sections of their websites. Consider calling the park's guest services department with any additional questions.

What You Can Do

As a customer, you should be treated with respect and discretion. If you feel you have been discriminated against after doing the necessary research regarding an amusement park's ride and accessibility policies, there are both federal and state organizations designed to assist you.

The U.S. Department of Justice operates a toll-free ADA information line. This line is staffed with ADA specialists who can help you determine if the ADA standards fit your particular situation. This hotline is available on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:30am-5:30pm and on Thursdays from 12:30pm-5:30pm Eastern Standard Time. You can reach them via the following ways:

ADA Information Line

800/514-0301 (voice)

800/514-0383 (TTY)

ADA.gov

The National Disability Rights Network is the nonprofit membership organization for the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy (sometimes known as Disability Rights) systems in each state. This network is the largest provider of legally based advocacy services to people with disabilities in the U.S. They may be contacted at 202/408-9514 (voice) or 202/408-9521 (TTY). You may look up your state's P&A system at NDRN.org/en/ndrn-member-agencies.html. You can also locate your specific state's Department of Protection and Advocacy through our website at amputee-coalition.org/limb-loss-resource-center/resources-by-state.

It is not the intention of the Amputee Coalition to provide specific medical or legal advice but rather to provide consumers with information to better understand their health and healthcare issues. The Amputee Coalition does not endorse any specific treatment, technology, company, service or device. Consumers are urged to consult with their healthcare providers for specific medical advice or before making any purchasing decisions involving their care.

National Limb Loss Resource Center, a program of the Amputee Coalition, located at 900 East Hill Ave., Suite 390, Knoxville, TN 37915 | 888/267-5669.

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