

Event Type: Church Festival/Midway Safety

Incident: Ground obstruction

Narrative

On Saturday, November 8, 2008, a church festival was held in Orlando, FL. The church had booked a carnival operator for the weekend. The church had contracted for 16 hard rides, 4 soft rides and devices, 10 midway games, and 5 food outlets. The church has held this event for the last 10 years. The church separately provides entertainment, arts and crafts, additional food outlets, beer garden, and a petting zoo. Multiple facilities are used including a 60'x60' pole tent. The carnival operators generate their own power to operate their amusement rides, devices, games, etc. They use trailer mounted generators and draw lines to each device or location. The power cords are bundled AWG #2 (approx. 1" radius bundled). Lines are drawn to multiple locations and buried or obstructed to prevent contact. The lines can be buried underground in asphalt or placed under a temporary cable cover. The carnival operator used a variety of techniques to prevent contact with the power cords.

It was approximately 5:45 pm on the second day of the festival. A 10 year old male was walking down the midway with cotton candy in one hand and a few ride tickets in the other. He had been at the festival for about 4 hours. He had experienced most of the rides and games multiple times. He was walking with a group of friends and decided to cut through an opening between a trash can and a bench. He tripped on an exposed power cord and fell face first hitting the ground. Additionally, his right arm got caught between the bench slats. The fall caused multiple facial lacerations, the loss of 2 permanent front teeth, and a broken right arm.

Problem statements

- What is considered a trip hazard?
- Is it necessary to bury all cables and trip hazards? Explain...
- Is it better to bury 9 out of 10 cables or have them all exposed? Explain...
- Who is responsible for contacting the child's parents? What kind of plan should be in place?
- Can EMS treat the child without the parent's permission? Why or why not?
- Is it the child's fault for cutting between the trashcan and bench? Explain?
- Should an inspection of the property revealed this trip hazard? What should have been done about it?
- Who should perform the inspection(s)?
- If the church documented the hazard and told the carnival operator to fix it what could happen? What if the church told them on more than one occasion? What if they had several band-aid calls at that location --- how does that impact the situation? What if no one ever saw it?
- Who is ultimately liable for the child's injuries?