

Event Type: Halloween Pumpkin Patch

Incident: Crushed by object

Narrative

On Saturday, October 25, 2008, a Midwest farmer held a Halloween event outside of Lincoln, NE. The owner of the farm land, Dan, was looking for a way to earn extra income during the winter months. Dan decided to host a Halloween event in conjunction with a pumpkin patch. This was Dan's first year of operation. He opened the event the second week of October. The event was scheduled to run through Halloween night. Dan had hired a group of 12 high school students to act as ghosts, goblins, etc. Dan was providing tractor trailer hayrides through his corn fields. Dan staged the high school students throughout the field. Their job was to jump out from behind the corn stalks and scare riders passing by.

Around 9:30 pm on Saturday, October 25, 2008, one of the students was waiting to scare a passing tractor trailer of unsuspecting guests. The student jumped out prematurely and found himself in front of an oncoming tractor tire. The student was crushed. The guests were freaked out. They continued on the route and finished the hayride. The guests could not hold their enthusiasm for the ride and told the driver what an amazing scare tactic he had used during the ride. They all told him the brains oozing out of the goblins head looked very authentic. Dan, the driver and owner, did not understand. He asked for some clarity. He received additional information and took off running. The student was dead on the scene.

Problem statements

- As an event planner, what should you do prior to opening or developing an event like this? Did Dan do his homework?
- Was the route and cues appropriately defined? Why or why not?
- What could be done to better define the established route and prompts? Could you establish zones (go, no go locations, etc.)?
- Do you think the training was appropriate considering the outcome? What steps would you take to provide better training?
- Should inspections be performed of the route and established zones? Who should inspect them?
- What type of insurance should Dan have?
- Should Dan contact the authorities? Which ones and why? How long does he have to contact them?
- Should Dan continue this operation? Why or why not?
- What should Dan do for the family of the deceased?
- What should be done for the employees at the farm and students at the high school the employee attended?