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Arizona water parks not regulated by government inspections

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By Lauren Reimer CONNECT

MESA, AZ (3TV/CBS 5) - The death of a 10-year-old boy on a Kansas water slide is sparking conversations about how amusement rides everywhere are inspected for safety.



[READ MORE: Source: Boy was decapitated on waterslide at Kansas park]



Arizona has some of the least-regulated amusement parks in the country, with no government system in place mandating regular inspections.

"This is scary stuff. I think any parent is going to be concerned when they hear this. It's hot, we're in Arizona and a great place to cool off is the water parks," said Attorney James Goodnow, a legal analyst with Fennemore Craig, P.C.

Today, cooling off for Rina Krizman means going to the splash pad with her kids. When they get a little bigger, they may ask to visit larger water parks.

"It's a blast. It's very fun; the slides are incredible," said Krizman.

But thrilling high drops and fast speeds may do more than just simulate risk. Water slides and roller coasters see very few regulations.

"That sounds very scary, actually," said Krizman.

Here in Arizona, there are no regular government inspections, like restaurants or workplaces have. The only rule parks must follow is that they carry insurance.

"The inspectors coming out for these services aren't necessarily giving a badge of approval, they're not saying it's safe or not, what they're doing is they're assessing risk," said Goodnow.

Arizona state law says municipalities can make their own inspection rules.

But so far, only Prescott and the Navajo Nation do, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

"I think that every parent has the right to know and I think that they owe it to parents to know this information because they might change their mind before sending their kids," said Krizman.

We reached out to Wet 'n' Wild to ask about its inspection schedules, but it initially declined to comment.

After seeing this story, the company sent us the following statement.

"At Wet 'n' Wild Phoenix, ensuring the public safety of our guests is our single greatest priority. An independent inspection is done each season, and the park remains under regulation and regular inspections from the Maricopa County Department of Environmental Services Department and Maricopa County Health Department. Wet 'n' Wild Phoenix remains in compliance with both departments' regulations. Additionally, an inspection and testing of every ride is conducted daily before guests are permitted to ride. All of the rafts and tubes used on the rides are inspected daily for proper inflation and safety. Wet 'n' Wild Phoenix adheres to the strict enforcement of the manufacturer's guidelines for the riders weight and height restrictions on each attraction."

We reached out to Sunsplash and Castles N Coasters, as well, but they have not yet replied one way or the other.

Here is more information from the U.S Consumer Product and Safety Commission:

Editor's note: This story was updated to include the statement from Wet 'n' Wild.

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Lauren Reimer joined the 3TV/CBS 5 family in June 2016. She is originally from Racine, WI but is no stranger to our heat.

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Events calendar for Tuesday, April 25, 2017. Includes: FOUND:RE Phoenix's 'Peep Show', Spring Healing Wildflower Show, Something for Everyone at Macayo's Mexican Table, Arizona No. 2 - Officers.



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