

Health and Safety Executive		Sector Information Minute	
Commercial and Consumer Services, Transportation and Utilities Sector (CACTUS)		SIM 05/2003/08	
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Target Audience:
FOD Inspectors with responsibilities for fairground inspection

THE INSPECTOR'S GUIDE TO THE INSPECTION OF TRAVELLING FAIRGROUND SITES

This SIM revises and updates information previously contained in SIM 5/2000/09 and reiterates the Fairground Supplement to the FOD Health and Safety Policy.

INTRODUCTION

1 Although it is intended that the National Fairgrounds Inspection Team (NFIT) will form a stable group of inspectors who will be experienced in the issues surrounding fairgrounds and showmen, it is appreciated that not all members will come to NFIT with fairground knowledge.

2 This SIM is intended to make inspectors aware of some of the issues surrounding fairgrounds and the people who make their living from fairs. The information is less applicable to fixed parks but some will be of relevance.

BACKGROUND

3 The most productive time for checking documentation of inspection reports and general matters at a travelling fairground site is during set up the day before the fair is due to open. Visiting during set up also allows inspections of rides which may be partly assembled, affording an opportunity that would not be available once the fair is open. Dutyholders will also have a chance to act on any recommendations prior to opening.

4 The travelling fair industry is in many ways quite unlike most other industries in terms of long standing traditions, cultural background, patterns of work, employment and the type of equipment used. It is these differences that necessitate inspectors adopting different and sometimes novel approaches to inspection.

5 Our main concern is not just for the safety of employees but also the safety of members of the public. This tends to give fairground health and safety a high political and media profile. Inspectors need to have a sufficient understanding of the people and the activities involved in the industry.

6 There is a great variation in the size and duration of fairs which can range from a small weekend country fair with possibly three main rides, to massive fairs, e.g. the Hull fair, with upwards of 50 major amusement devices running for 2-3 weeks. The working day can be extremely long, sometimes as much as 20 hours when setting up and pulling down the fair. A typical day's work will begin around 10 am and finish about 1.30 am the next morning

with the fair open possibly between 2.00 pm and 11.00 pm inspectors should be mindful of this when attempting to contact fairground dutyholders.

7 The typical working week might involve setting out for a new site on a Monday, possibly with an overnight drive. A rest day on Tuesday followed by building up beginning on the Wednesday. The fair may open on the Thursday at around 7.00 pm and finish at 10.30 pm with the same hours on Friday. Saturday opening might be longer. Pull down begins on Sunday and the process is repeated.

8 It is common for a number of showmen to travel around the country under the leadership of one fair organiser. Passing on details of the next area to be visited will help the next HSE inspector and reduce unnecessary multiple inspections.

9 The majority of travelling showmen are members of one of four organisations:

- (1) The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain (SGGB);
- (2) The Society of Independent Roundabout Proprietors (SIRPs);
- (3) The Amusement Catering Equipment Society (ACES);
- (4) The Association of Independent Showmen (AIS).

Contact details for these organisations are given at [Appendix 2](#).

10 Of these 4 organisations the Guild is the largest with about 5000 members. ACES, SIRPs and AIS are much smaller associations, of about 100 members each, who mainly operate vintage equipment.

11 Good communications exist in the industry. It is not uncommon for Guild HQ to pass around details of accidents and notices that have been issued. In addition the Guild will sometimes question the validity of advice or course of action adopted by inspectors.

12 SGGB section offices can be a useful source of telephone numbers for individual showmen if required. Details of SGGB offices are given in [SIM 5/2002/20](#).

CULTURAL ASPECTS

13 The family unit is strong in this community. Family first names tend to be reused within each family so that there may be several people with the same first name. Care is therefore needed to ensure that the correct individual has been identified. The use of senior or junior sometimes works until senior dies and the references move on one generation. Each showman in SGGB has a unique Guild Number. Inspectors may find this a useful means of distinguishing between individuals with the same name.

14 Some showmen have limited literacy skills, as their lifestyle has historically prevented access to formal education but this is less the case with younger generations due to the efforts of education authorities. Most have impressive numerical ability. Inspectors need to take a flexible approach to written risk assessments and replies to letters.

PERSONAL SAFETY

15 Inspectors should be mindful of the draft FOD Health and Safety Supplement for the

Entertainment industry at [Appendix 1](#) when visiting fairgrounds. It is a considerable update on the current Supplement 18. Although the Supplement at Appendix 1 has been submitted for inclusion in the new edition of the FOD Health and Safety Policy, it has not yet been published. Once a new version is published and becomes part of the FOD Health and Safety Supplement, it will supercede Appendix 1.

16 It is recommended that inspectors should not normally carry out unaccompanied visits during fair opening times. This is especially true for late evening visits where those attending the fair may include large numbers of young males, possibly under the influence of drink or drugs. The sheer numbers of people at the fair may also pose a hazard and inspectors should be alert to this, particularly after dark.

ENQUIRIES

17 Enquiries regarding this SIM should be addressed to the Entertainment Section of the Food and Entertainment Sector at the Glasgow office (Tel 0141 275 3012, e-mail Area 21, FOD Entertainment Section).

CANCELLATION OF INSTRUCTION

18 SIM 5/2000/09 - **cancel** and **destroy**.

Date first issued: 24 February 2003



[Back to Main Paper SIM 5/2003/08](#)

APPENDIX 1
(para 15)

Health and Safety Executive
Field Operations Directorate

Supplement XX

FOD HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

ENTERTAINMENT SUPPLEMENT

Contents

Para Heading

- 1 Who should read and apply this policy?
- 2 Summary
- 3 - 5 Responsibilities
- 6 General approach to site visits
- 7 - 8 Fairgrounds and Amusement Parks
- 9 - 16 Hazards
- 17 Broadcasting and Performing Arts
- 18 - 22 Hazards
- 23 Risk Assessment
- 24 - 25 Precautions
- 26 Personal Protective Equipment
- 27 - 28 Information and Training
- 29 Monitoring and Review

Appendix 1 Other Relevant Supplements

Who should read and apply this policy?

1 FOD heads of division, all visiting staff and their line managers.

Summary

2 This supplement lays out a general policy on the conduct of site visits to entertainment industry premises. It provides guidance on the main hazards likely to be encountered and the safeguards to be adopted. Other policy supplements which deal with specific topics give further advice. Appendix 1 lists these supplements and reference should be made to them.

Responsibilities

3 **FOD heads of division** are responsible for implementing, monitoring and regularly reviewing the implementation of this policy in their division.

4 **Line managers** are responsible for:

- (1) ensuring that this supplement is brought to the attention of their staff and that their staff apply its provisions whilst visiting relevant premises;

(2) ensuring that personal protective equipment as indicated in this supplement ([para 26](#));

(3) ensuring that staff receive appropriate information and training relevant to their health and safety when in entertainment premises.

5 **Visiting staff** are expected to:

(1) understand and apply this policy whilst in relevant premises;

(2) report problems with the implementation of this policy to their line manager.

General Approach to Site Visits

6 Staff should refer to Supplement 00 - General Approach to Site Visits.

Fairgrounds and amusement parks

7 When visiting travelling fairground sites staff should introduce themselves to the first fairground person they meet and ask to speak to the fairground organiser. Showmen's living accommodation should not be approached unless an invitation is given.

8 Fixed sites and amusement parks will generally have a management structure and this should be contacted in the usual fashion.

Hazards

9 Hazards to Inspectors in fair grounds are generally low, however the following should be considered.

Health

10 The most likely health hazard is noise. The duration of exposure during fairground inspection is sufficiently short that the first action level is highly unlikely to be exceeded. Reference should be made to supplement 35 (noise).

Safety

11 It will occasionally necessary to visit a fair whilst it is open to the public. Under such circumstances the possibility of encountering aggressive or even violent behaviour must always be considered. The general precautions in supplement 25 (Violence to Staff) should be followed. Particular consideration should be given to the need for accompanied visits under these circumstances. Contact and communications are important and visiting staff should take mobile phones.

12 It is not normally necessary to ride on a fairground device. Various strategies are available for obtaining information in the event of a complaint that the ride motion is too violent. These include the following:

(1) watching the ride in motion particularly if it is carrying passengers. A video recording would provide a permanent record;

(2) measuring the key parts of the passenger containment system; and

(3) obtaining support from TD or HSL, particularly if it is felt necessary to obtain ergonomic or dynamic measurements. The Food and Entertainment Sector, Entertainment Section should be consulted if necessary.

13 If staff consider that it is necessary to ride a device, this should be done only if there is prior agreement with the operator on matters such as maximum speed, number of cycles, ride duration, etc.

14 Staff must not ride on devices if there is any evident risk.

15 Staff should take care not to distract ride operators when the ride is in motion.

16 The commonly encountered hazards such as electricity and trip risks are present in fairgrounds as in other workplaces.

Broadcasting and performing arts

17 Risks to inspectors in theatres, television and film studios are generally low however the following should be considered.

Hazards

Health

18 There are no particular health hazards in this area.

Safety

19 Staff should not enter elevated lighting grids on stage or screen sets without adopting the same system of work used by the production company or receiving house. Additional information on working at heights is contained in supplement 06(1) (Construction).

20 Staff should be alert for vehicle movements in larger facilities. Consideration should be given to the use of high visibility clothing ([see para 26](#)).

21 Where staff are aware of work above head height, there may be a need to wear head protection ([para 26](#)).

22 The commonly encountered hazards such as electricity and trip risks are present in these premises as in other workplaces.

Risk assessment

23 Provided that normal attention to your own health and safety is exercised, in conjunction with the provisions of this policy and other relevant supplements, there should be little risk to your health and safety. Staff should familiarise themselves with the available information on particular premises and activities prior to visiting. Staff should comply with employers rules for visitors unless they have significant concerns about the appropriateness of these.

Precautions

24 If staff have significant concerns about their health or safety in any premise they should not enter and should refer the matter to their line manager. If staff have commenced a visit

and become concerned about their health or safety, they should terminate the visit and advise their line manager.

25 General precautions are detailed in the relevant paragraphs of this supplement.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

26 The following personal protective equipment is required and its provision should be ensured by line management:

- (1) safety footwear;
- (2) hearing protection - this may be required when observing pyrotechnics or other noisy special effects;
- (3) head protection - not normally required unless work above head height is anticipated;
- (4) high visibility clothing - consider for use where vehicle movements are occurring.

Reference should be made to supplements 24, 24(1) and 35.

Information and training

27 Inspectors new to entertainment inspection should initially visit with experienced colleagues.

28 All staff who visit entertainment premises should be familiar with the guidance and reference materials produced by the Food and Entertainment Sector, Entertainment Section. Some of this material was produced by the former Local Government and Entertainment Services NIG, though this may be old, much is still useful. Current SIMs and NIGMs are available on the Intranet. Other material is available in office libraries, on the fairgrounds bulletin board or from the Sector.

Monitoring and review

29 The Food and Entertainment Sector, Entertainment Section will review this supplement as required.

APPENDIX 1 (of draft entertainment supplement) (para 2)

OTHER SUPPLEMENTS OF RELEVANCE TO ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY PREMISES

Supplement	Title
0 0	General Approach to Site Visits
06(01)	Construction
24	Protective Clothing and Respiratory Protective Equipment
24(1)	A System for the Selection, Use, Examination and Maintenance of

	Respiratory Protective Equipment for use by FOD Field Professionals
25	Violence to Staff
35	Noise

[TOP](#) 

[Back to Main Paper SIM 5/2003/08](#)

APPENDIX 2
(PARA 9)

CONTACT DETAILS FOR FAIRGROUND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

- 1 Showmen's Guild of Great Britain:

Guild House, 41 Clarence Street,
Staines, Middlesex, TW18 4SY
- 2 Society of Independent Roundabout Proprietors:

C/o 66 Carolgate, Retford
Notts, DN22 6EF
- 3 Amusement Catering Equipment Society:

22 Priory Road
Reigate, Surrey, RH2 8JB
- 4 Association of Independent Showmen

PO Box 194,
Diss, IP21 4EN

[TOP](#) 