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SAFETY THREATENS TO DAMPEN FUN OF THE FAIR

A Health and Safety Executive report into the safety of fairground rides which was classed last year as “urgent” will come too late to make a difference this holiday season.

As thousands of children are already more than two weeks into the school holidays, and leisure parks and fairgrounds get busier, the HSE has been criticised for delaying a report which may have made fairgrounds a safer place.

Denise Kitchener, chief executive of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) said the report, which should have been released earlier in the year, will have little or no impact on fairground safety this summer.

“We understand the release of the report is imminent but it should have come much sooner,” she said. “The HSE first started looking at this on an urgent basis last July. One year on, and we’ve already had one well-publicised death and no report from the HSE.

“What the industry needs is a complete overhaul of safety standards and tougher measures to make sure those standards don’t slip. Five people died last year on fairground rides - we are concerned that unless urgent action is taken to shake up the industry we will see more serious accidents and deaths.”

APIL believes current guidelines in place for fairground operators, organisers, ride owners and inspectors are not strict enough to ensure a high standard of safety.

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The HSE admits in its fairground safety review that “events regarding examinations of

fairground rides, particularly with respect to the competence and diligence of third party examiners, have raised questions about the adequacy and application of the current regime.”

“The HSE needs to clamp down on the way the fairground industry is regulated and it needs to act now,” said Denise. “It is not compulsory for people to obtain the guidelines so how can we be certain that proper safety measures are in place?”

“We just hope that when the report is issued it is detailed and strict enough to protect people from being thrown from rides because of loose safety bars, or from other faults that can cost lives. Sadly, it is already too late to make a difference this season, but how many more tragic and unnecessary deaths will we see before something is done?”

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Note to editors: For further information, please contact:

Lorraine Gwinnutt
Press & Parliamentary Manager
APIL
11 Castle Quay
Nottingham
NG7 1FW
Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 924 3485
email: lorraine@apil.com

or

Lisa Wardle
Press & PR Officer
APIL
Tel: 0115 958 0585
Fax: 0115 924 3485
email: lisa@apil.com