

Lanier Law Group, P.A.

Fighting for Justice

NORTH CAROLINA'S LEGAL NEWS INSIDER

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With summer right around the corner, millions of Americans are gearing up to head to amusement parks, carnivals, and theme parks for thrills and excitement.

Unfortunately, dangers await them as well. Each year, on average, 10,000 people suffer injuries at parks and five people die, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Because rules on reporting amusement park accidents and injuries vary so much from state to state, and since many injuries go unreported, the true number of accident injuries is hard to determine.

The injuries that are reported range from less serious ones such as bumps, bruises and small cuts to more serious injuries such as broken bones, brain injuries, paralysis, and loss of limb. In one of the more tragic recent cases, a 13-year-old girl on a tower-drop ride at a Six Flags park in Kentucky had both of her feet severed when a

cable broke during the ride and struck the girl in the legs at a high rate of speed.

Overall, some of the main reasons for injuries at parks include:

- Rider error, such as standing up during a ride or removing restraints.
- Mechanical failure.
- Ride operator negligence, which may result from inattentiveness or failing to properly secure riders.
- Falls at entrances or exits to rides.

If you or a loved one has suffered a serious injury at an amusement park or carnival, it is important to contact an experienced personal injury attorney to determine if you may be owed damages. ■

Some websites, such as www.rideaccidents.com, have been created to help inform the general public about accidents that occur at parks, carnivals and fairs. Of particular concern is the amount of accidents and injuries sustained from so-called inflatable rides like moon bounces or slides.



On May 8th Lanier Law Group, P.A. was a Bronze Sponsor of Dining For Friends which raises money for the Triad Health Project to provide HIV/AIDS services to individuals in the Piedmont/Triad of North Carolina. The event included private parties and dinners all over the Triad and culminated in a celebration held at the Greensboro Coliseum featuring music by Sleeping Booty.



Meet the Lanier Law Group team members who fight for you.



On March 27th, Lanier Law Group, P.A. sponsored a team of 70 people to attend the Walk for MS at The North Carolina Zoo. Our team won the award for the largest team. We had fun and raised lots of money to help fight MS.



On May 1st, Lanier Law Group, P.A. joined forces with Rock 92 and the Two Guys Named Chris Show to sponsor the Guilford County Sniper Challenge. Every year Lanier Law Group helps raise money for the SERT team in Guilford County with this event. This year Lisa Lanier and several Lanier Law Group, P.A. team members staffed a tent along with Biggie from the Two Guys Named Chris Show. They handed out free mugs and t-shirts and greeted fans of the show. Lisa participated in the Media Shoot and placed third overall.

black-lung disease ON THE RISE

After declining from the late 1960s through the mid-1990s, incidences of pneumoconiosis, more commonly known as black-lung disease, have risen in the past decade and led to the deaths of an estimated 10,000 miners during that time.

Black-lung disease, which comes from inhaling coal mine dust, can lead to shortness of breath, scarring of the lungs, emphysema, disability, chronic coughing, and premature death.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), after the passage of the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act in 1969, cases of black-lung had dropped by about 90 percent. However, by 1995, the downward trend stopped, and since then the number of black-lung cases has doubled.

So, why has black-lung disease shown a resurgence?

While the exact reasons are not known, the NIOSH points to several possible explanations including:

- Shortcomings in existing coal-mine-dust regulations and safety measures.
- Failure to enforce or comply with those safety regulations.
- New mining practices and techniques that increase exposure to dust.
- Coal miners work longer hours in recent years.
- Miners not participating in screenings (including chest X-rays) that would potentially detect early problems or warning signs.

New rules are being considered that would require some miners to utilize a device known as a continuous personal dust monitor. The monitors would let miners know instantly what they are exposed to, but would cost about \$10,000 each. ■



CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEM SPURS auto safety advances

With the world's biggest automaker, Toyota, still struggling with sudden acceleration problems in some of its vehicles, an important new report has been released that shows the key role the civil justice system has played in encouraging auto safety during the last 50 years.

The report, entitled "Driven to Safety: How Litigation has Spurred Auto Safety Innovations," was released by the American Association for Justice this past April and illustrates how design defect litigation has helped to reveal defects in cars and trucks, expose weaknesses in regulations, enforce safety standards, and deter auto manufacturers from skimping on safety in an effort to boost profits.

One of the examples cited in the report was how litigation led to the improvements in the safety of power window controls on cars. American auto manufacturers had been well aware of some of the potential problems with their "rocker" style switches, which if leaned onto could inadvertently lead to a window closing and trapping a child. Tragically, in 2004, during a span of just three months, seven children died from accidents involving power window controls.

And even though auto manufacturers started to offer safer "pull-up" style switches on vehicles sold in foreign markets, it wasn't until they were faced with litigation that they began to install the safer switches on domestic vehicles, since the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration did not have any rules in place regarding power window safety.

Other safety improvements mentioned in the report that arose from design defect litigation include:

- Important life-saving modifications and repairs to vehicle gas tanks
- Seat belts
- Side-impact design
- Roof strength
- Tires
- Electronic stability control
- Door latches
- Air bags
- Power windows and seats

The full report on auto safety improvements spurred by litigation can be viewed at www.Justice.org/autosafety. ■



wanna' hear a good lawyer joke?

What's the difference between a poisonous snake
and a lawyer?

You can make a pet out of the snake



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hidden danger POOL AND SPA ENTRAPMENT FROM DRAINS

With summertime upon us, many of us will seek out pools and spas for recreation and relaxation, but it's important to know that drains in pools and spas can cause injuries and even death if people become entrapped against them.

Follow these tips from the Consumer Product Safety Commission to reduce your risk:

- Do not use a pool or spa with a missing or broken drain cover. Newer, safer drain covers are available and are usually dome-shaped -- instead of the old flat drain covers.
- Consider installing a Safety Vacuum Release System (SVRS), a device that will automatically shut off a pump if a blockage is detected.

- Have a professional regularly inspect your pool or spa for entrapment or entanglement hazards.
- Plainly mark the location of the electrical cut-off switch for the pool or spa pump.
- If someone is entrapped against a drain, shut off the pump immediately. Instead of trying to pull the person away from the powerful suction, pry a hand between the drain and the person's body to break the seal.

For more pool and spa safety information, please visit www.CPSC.gov. ■

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