



“Inspect Thyself”

During my tenure in the amusement industry, I’ve inspected over 1200 family entertainment centers nationwide and too many to count amusement parks, theme parks, water parks, carnivals, and many other types of amusement facilities. My collection of interesting photos is vast, and the kinds of safety problems are interesting, although at times scary. Some of the things I find, I should not be finding.

So rather than bore with the typical safety related topic, I’m going to give all the readers a field assignment. I know for a fact, because I hear it all the time that your facility is safe and finding a few discrepancies would be difficult. So, with that thought in mind, here is your assignment.

The next time you go to the grocery store, Wal Mart, Office Depot, Lowes, McDonald’s, the quick mart for gas, take your children to school, dry cleaners, car wash, hardware store, theater, etc., perform a simple safety inspection and see how these business stack up against your facility. Look them over with a very critical eye for safety and aesthetics. Your mission is to find as many safety hazards with the business as possible.

It’s simple. Here are questions to be asking yourself:

1. When you enter the parking lot is there adequate lighting and directional signage?
2. Are the parking spaces well marked including the handicapped spaces?
3. Is the pavement well maintained to prevent trips and falls?
4. Upon entering the business are floors well maintained and dry not causing any slip, trip or fall hazards
5. Are any sharp edges, broken glass or objects sticking out causing a laceration hazard?
6. See if the fire extinguishers are fully charges and safety pin is in place?
7. Are the lighted exit signs, lighted?

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8. If you can easily reach them, press the test button on the emergency light pack to see if it lights? This drives my wife nuts; I'm always lighting these things up.
 9. Are the trash receptacles overflowing?
 10. Are there any dimly lit areas?
 11. If electrical outlets and wall switches are visible, do they look to be in good condition, i.e., covers in place, cords not frayed, etc.
 12. If you use the restroom, is it clean, are the floors dry, are the mirrors in good condition, the stall doors hanging correctly, etc.?
 13. Basically, look the business over from top to bottom and ask yourself, is this business safe enough to bring my family to? And if you do find something; let the manager know about it.

Now here is the most difficult part of the assignment. Inspect your facility with the same critical eye for detail. Everyone's child is the most beautiful thing in the world, even if it has three ears and wart on its nose. If you're honest with yourself and your facility, you will only improve the quality and beauty of it. And the best side product is that it may increase your business.

You don't have to be an OSHA or building inspector to perform this task. If you are a practical person with common sense, you will do an excellent job. Many of us do this for a living and have years of training and experience. If you do decide to try this, I would be interested to hear about your experience. It might make a good follow up article.

If you would like a little help with the assignment, send me an email at kvondriska@vondriskaleisure.com and I'll send you a copy of the checklist I use when I perform a facility inspection.

Ken Vondriska