

Riding Knott's Pacific Spin? Step on the scale

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When Knott's Soak City opens on Saturday, visitors headed to Pacific Spin will notice something a little different: They'll be asked to stand on a platform to get weighed before they climb aboard.

The scale will weigh people by groups, so riders won't be able to tell if that corn dog at lunch had any effect.

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"It's not going to show a number. It's going to show a red, yellow or green light," said Erika Monterroza, spokeswoman for Cal-OSHA, the state safety agency that regulates theme park rides.

The red light means a group is too heavy. A yellow light means a group of up to four is under 700 pounds, light enough for one of the ride's four-seat rafts. A green light means a group is under 400 pounds and can ride a two-seater. Riders are not allowed to go solo.

Only the ride operators will see the lights, Monterroza said.

Cal-OSHA ordered the scale's installation after an accident on Aug. 24, the last in a string of several incidents in which the ride's rafts went into operation carrying too much weight.

According to an accident investigation conducted by the state, a woman fell out of the raft, scraping her elbow. She later complained of pain on other areas of her body.

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State officials said they repeatedly had warned Knott's to re-train ride supervisors, asking them to split up groups that might be too heavy. After the August accident, Cal-OSHA took it out of the operators' hands, requiring Knott's to install scales.

Knott's operates Soak City parks in Buena Park, Palm Springs and Chula Vista. Scales have been installed at the Pacific Spin rides at all three locations, Knott's spokeswoman Jennifer Blazey said.

The ride's enormous slide sucks riders through a 132-foot long tunnel and at 35 feet per second, drops them 75 feet and into a six-story funnel. About 5,500 gallons of water tosses riders back and forth in the funnel before dumping them into a waiting catch pool. The ride cost \$1.7 million and opened in 2006.