



MARINE SAFETY ALERT
Inspections and Compliance Directorate

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Washington, DC

Safety Alert 09-18

**It's just a Slide. What could go wrong?
Get seriously injured and you'll sing a different song!**

This safety alert stems from two separate casualties investigated by Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Chicago. At issue is the installation of water slides onboard commercial vessels sometimes characterized as "Party Boats." In both events, passengers using the slide contacted the vessel's aft rail and sustained severe bone fractures.

Slides much like those commonly used at pools, shown in Photograph 1, offer an element of fun during hot days on the water. Besides commercial vessels they are also found installed onboard private boats, rental house boats, and rental party barges. The Coast Guard does not regulate the installation or usage of these slides.



The slide in Photograph 1 above is of the open flume design. Closed flume slides (e.g., tubular designs) help to prevent users from contacting components external to the slide.

With the open flume slide, users should keep arms and legs away from objects they might encounter on the way down. However, that common sense approach isn't always observed. Slide users who are enjoying a party atmosphere and alcoholic beverages have strayed off the preferred path during the short descent before hitting the water. As can be seen in the Photograph 1 above, contacting the rail on which the slide sits on would not be difficult to do.

To reduce the contact hazard to slide users, supports can be installed directly under the slide as show in the Photograph 2.



It is understood that there may be many human factors such as misjudgment, impairment, and carelessness that can lead to slide injuries. Photograph 3 shows a passenger who went down an independently supported slide that was clear of any objects at the base that could be struck and cause injury. In this instance the person's path down the slide was irregular because he attempted to go down it while standing up.

The Coast Guard **emphatically reminds** Owners, Operators and Captains of any vessel with a slide installed that they have the responsibility to ensure the overall safety of their vessels, passengers, and crewmembers. **If a slide installation appears to present unnecessary risk, actions should be taken to minimize the dangers to those persons who may use it.**



This Safety Alert is provided for informational purposes only and does not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational or material requirement. Developed by USCG Marine Safety Unit Chicago and distributed by the Office of Investigations and Analysis. Questions may be sent to HQS-PF-flidr-CG-INV@uscg.mil.

Note: There are ASTM standards that relate to slide design, construction, and operations of shore side installations. These standards may provide some important insights to those persons or organizations installing slides on vessels. ASTM reference numbers: ASTM F2376 Water Slide Systems; ASTM F2291 Standard Practice for Design of Amusement Rides and Devices