

Thursday, May 17, 2007

CITY INSPECTS AMUSEMENT RIDES AT STREET FAIRS, FESTIVALS, AND BLOCK PARTIES TO ENSURE SAFE AND FUN SUMMER

Agencies Remind Operators and Event Coordinators of Licensing and Inspection Requirements

The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and Buildings Department today kicked off the summer season by sending an important message to temporary amusement ride operators, ride owners, and event organizers: all rides at street fairs, block parties, festivals, and carnivals must be licensed and pass safety inspections. The announcement was made at St. Demetrios Church in Queens, where Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz and Buildings Commissioner Patricia J. Lancaster took an inaugural spin on the Ferris Wheel following a full inspection in preparation for the Church's annual bazaar. The Commissioners were joined today by Christie Huus, Assistant Commissioner for the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit (CAU).

The City inspects and licenses temporary amusement rides, including Ferris Wheels, Tilt-a-Whirls, and Carousels, throughout the summer to ensure the safety of those operating and riding them. Installed at street fairs, block parties, and special events in all five boroughs, temporary amusement rides must be licensed by the Department of Consumer Affairs and pass inspection by the Buildings Department prior to operating. Each time a temporary amusement ride relocates to a new street fair or block party, a 'green card' must be posted prominently on-site. A 'green card' signifies that the temporary amusement ride has a DCA license and has passed a thorough inspection by the Department of Buildings.

"Street fairs, block parties, and festivals are real hallmarks of summertime in New York City," said Commissioner Mintz. "Event organizers, parents, and caregivers should always make sure rides are licensed and inspected. It's also never been easier for operators to get licensed simply by calling 311 or going online."

"Last year's amusement ride season was both fun and safe, thanks to the cooperation of the riders, vendors, operators, and the agencies that regulate them – the Buildings Department and the Department of Consumer Affairs. We look forward to another season of working to protect the public from the dangers they can't always see by conducting spot checks to ensure all rides are licensed and ride operators are following safety regulations. In the meantime, we encourage New Yorkers and tourists alike to look for the 'green card' before riding the rides," said Commissioner Lancaster.

"Street festivals are a classic part of summer in New York City, and they offer New Yorkers an excellent opportunity to get out and enjoy the warm weather," said CAU Assistant Commissioner Huus. "We look forward to another safe and enjoyable season."

The City expects over 1,000 temporary amusement rides to operate at street fairs, block parties, and special events in all five boroughs this summer. The Department of Consumer Affairs has already received approximately 60 applications for temporary rides and licensed more than 200 portable and inflatable rides for this season. All operators of portable and inflatable amusement rides are required to have a one-year license from DCA. To obtain a DCA license, ride owners must provide proof of

insurance and rides must pass an inspection by the Buildings Department. To make it easier for ride operators, ride owners, and event coordinators to abide by the requirements, the City requires only 12 days notice to perform inspections and process license applications for temporary amusement rides.

In addition to inspecting rides before they are operated, Buildings Department inspectors will be conducting unannounced spot checks during nights and weekends throughout the season to ensure rides are licensed and operating in a safe and compliant manner. Temporary amusement rides operating without a DCA license or without passing a Buildings Department inspection will be shut down.

The Department of Consumer Affairs provides an updated list of licensed rides every week on its Web site at www.nyc.gov/consumers. To learn more about safety regulations and temporary amusement ride licenses, visit www.nyc.gov/buildings or call 311. The Mayor's Community Assistance Unit (CAU) issues permits for street fairs and block parties throughout the City. More information can be found at www.nyc.gov/cau.

Safety Tips Attached

Temporary Amusement Rides Fact Sheet