



Effective safety briefings for drivers at karting circuits

Entertainment Information Sheet No 21

Introduction

This information sheet is published by HSE and has been prepared in consultation with the Fairgrounds Joint Advisory Committee and the National Karting Association. The guidance is relevant to go-karts used at separate karting tracks that are not part of a fairground or amusement park. For fairgrounds and amusement parks it should be read in conjunction with *Health and safety at motor sport events: A guide for employers and organisers* (see 'Further reading'). The guidance is not intended to cover all-terrain karts or go-karts used in competitive motor sports events, which are regulated by a recognised motor sport governing body such as the Motor Sports Association.

Kart drivers are in control of their own safety and that of the others on the track. They need to know how to control the vehicle and how to respond to the safety signals they are given while driving. It is important that the briefing they receive is effective in presenting the safety information in a way they can understand and remember. Effective safety briefings are an important part of the safety system at any karting track.

The information in this sheet is based on the findings of research carried out by the Health and Safety Laboratory, an agency of HSE, and designed to identify the best practices to adopt when delivering briefings at indoor karting venues. This sheet includes a briefing framework that can be used as the basis for producing your own briefings.

Surroundings

The briefing should be given in appropriate surroundings. People remember information better if they have to recall it in the surroundings in which they were given it. Where possible, give the briefing either on or by the track, so that drivers can see the position of lights and where flags will be shown. It can be useful to use a mix of verbal and video briefing but video-taped briefings are less interactive and can be seen as detached from the 'real' environment of karting. If a video is used, make sure drivers see all of it from start to finish and do not start watching part way through.

Delivering the briefing

The briefing should be given in a serious manner. Although light-hearted jokes are a good way of keeping the drivers' attention, limit their use as they must not detract from the importance of the safety information. The hazardous nature of the sport must be made clear to participants. It may be useful to end the briefing with an encouragement to participants to enjoy themselves but a reminder that karting is a motor sport and can be dangerous.

Repeating important information makes the probability of drivers hearing and retaining it more likely but this should not be overdone. Mentioning key facts, such as the colour and nature of each flag, two or three times, should be sufficient.

Testing

One way of ensuring that drivers pay attention throughout the briefing is to test their knowledge before they are allowed to drive. It is important to tell the participants that they will be tested before they are allowed in a kart. This should increase the level of attention they pay to the briefing. The test should take the form of two or three questions to the group. Avoid picking on someone as this may cause embarrassment. This should also be carried out when video briefings are used.

Briefing order

The briefing should be given in a logical order, ideally presenting not more than nine pieces of information. It is helpful to outline to drivers what will be covered in the briefing, in list form. The briefing should include the information included in the following checklist. You can use this to structure your own briefings, adding information specific to your site in the spaces provided.

Checklist for driver briefing

	<i>Tick when completed</i>	<i>Other information</i>
1 Overview	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2 Safety equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3 The kart	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4 Race/practice rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5 The flags	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6 Other important points	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7 Resume of flags	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Using props

A useful way of getting information across to drivers is for them to observe the behaviour of others. For instance, it is useful for them to actually see a demonstration of how to get in and out of a kart properly.

Familiarisation with kart and track

Giving drivers a walking tour of the track before they get in a kart is a good way of familiarising them with the track. Point out the positions during the event of (a) the driving line; (b) the marshals; (c) the flags; and (d) any lights used. If a walk round the track is not practical, a diagram of the track can be useful when explaining these issues. Also, allow the drivers to have a few practice laps in the kart before the main event begins. This will allow them to familiarise themselves with the kart, its controls and the track environment. It is a good idea to correct any errors during practice and to make sure they understand how to correct their behaviour **before** the event begins.

Further reading

Go-karts: Guidance for safe operation and use HSG200 HSE Books 2000 ISBN 0 7176 1752 1

Health and safety at motor sport events: A guide for employers and organisers HSG112 HSE Books 1999 ISBN 0 7176 0705 4

Karting: A guide to safe circuit operation Video HSE Books 2000 ISBN 0 7176 1820 X

Fairgrounds and amusement parks: Guidance on safe practice. Practical guidance on the management of health and safety for those involved in the fairgrounds industry HSG175 HSE Books 1997 ISBN 0 7176 1174 4

Further information

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For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 08701 545500 Fax: 02920 859260 e-mail: hseinformationservices@natbrit.com or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

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