Six Flags broke her back and won’t cover costs

This is the story of how Six Flags broke Tiffany Greggs’ back and left her stuck with huge hospital bills. Don’t let it happen to you.

Six Flags Customers beware

A ride at the Six Flags Hurricane Harbor amusement park broke the back of Tiffany Greggs, and they won’t pay her medical bills. The public needs to know that if they or their children are injured at a Six Flags amusement park, they may end up stuck with huge medical bills, and headed for personal bankruptcy, just like Tiffany. One never seems to recover completely from an injury like this, and Tiffany may have to have surgery again in the future. Even at that, she extremely lucky that she wasn’t paralyzed. Please do not give Six Flags a chance to do to you what they did to her.
Six Flags sure knows how to avoid liability

Six Flags management is extremely clever. According to the first lawyer Tiffany tried to hire, Six Flags was “self-insured”, and declared bankruptcy soon after her accident. What a perfect legal setup to avoid liability for an unsafe ride! Many lawyers were contacted during the bankruptcy, and none of them would take the case, simply because Six Flags’ bankruptcy meant that a lawyer could not earn much money for the effort required. As Six Flags evidently knows, the world still keeps score in dollars.

A big “Success Bonus” for the Six Flags CEO

According to Bloombergiii, around the time of the Six Flags bankruptcy declaration, a three million dollar “success bonus” was established for CEO Mark Shapiro as part of his employment agreement extension. In my opinion, maybe he really did deserve a big bonus—for having people working for him that are so darned clever at limiting Six Flags’ liability for dangerous conditions.
Here’s the lovely “Bride of Frankenstein” look during Tiffany’s recovery from major surgery. Tiffany was dazed like this for a long time due to the heavy medications, and was still wearing the back brace many months later. Thanks, Six Flags. What you can’t see here is the big tube that the doctors stuck in to drain the chest cavity. Bonus!
How Six Flags broke her back

In July 2008, Tiffany went to the Six Flags Hurricane Harbor amusement park with her Aunt, Uncle, and adult cousins. Some of them decided to ride the “award winning attraction” Six Flags modestly calls the Tornado. The Six Flags staff loaded three of them in a four person raft, and shoved them off. The passengers went down a chute, and dropped into a huge funnel. When they hit the funnel, Tiffany’s spine broke from the impact. It wasn’t your typical break; it was a severe compression fracture. What an experience it was to ride the rest of the way down the funnel, flopping back and forth with a broken spine. It was certainly a ride that she will never forget.

The engineer who designed the ride happened to be there when Tiffany was injured. He told Tiffany’s relatives that no one had ever been injured on the ride before. Six Flags must keep him in the dark, because we have since learned of others who have been severely injured on the Tornado.

After the major back surgery described above, Tiffany was in the hospital until July 21, 2008. She was in no shape to fly to her mother’s home in Texas to recover. Fortunately local relatives took her in, fed her, and took care of her during the long and excruciatingly painful recovery. Needless to say, she couldn’t earn a living for awhile.

Six Flags proposes a remedy

At the time of the accident, Six Flags offered the girl’s relatives free passes to come back another day, and even offered to pay for the ambulance! How generous!

Tiffany waited out the bankruptcy, and hired a lawyer. At mediation in June of 2012, Six Flags offered her a whole $20,000! This is somewhere in the vicinity of 20% of her medical bills from her injury. Now Tiffany is going to have to take off two weeks from work to go to trial and attempt to force Six Flags to pay her medical bills. If you get hurt at Six Flags, this is probably the treatment you and your family can expect. I recommend that you do not go to Six Flags.
Sometimes the meds wore thin, and Tiffany was more awake. Not a fun way to spend a summer. It hurt—a lot. It still hurts. It is always going to hurt. Tiffany was out of work for a long time, couldn’t pay her rent or take care of herself, and had to move in with relatives. As far as we can tell, Six Flags simply doesn’t care about helping people that they injure. It seems odd that they would rather give out bonuses and build new Six Flags facilities, instead of taking responsibility for what they did.

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1 According to the USPTO, “Six Flags” is a registered trademark of Six Flags Theme Parks, Inc. Corporation Delaware, 924 Avenue J East, Grand Prairie, Texas, 75050, in the “goods and services” area of “operating of amusement parks which include various indoor and outdoor entertainment and recreational facilities.”. I am using the words “Six Flags” on this web page merely to identify the name of the amusement park company that broke her back.
According to the USPTO, “Hurricane Harbor” is a registered trademark of Six Flags Theme Parks, Inc. Corporation Delaware, 924 Avenue J East, Grand Prairie, Texas, 75050, in the “goods and services” area of “entertainment services in the nature of family theme parks, amusement parks, and water parks”. I am using the words “Hurricane Harbor” on this web page merely to identify the name of the specific Six Flags amusement park that broke her back.

Bloomberg, April 14, 2009: