

# Arizona passes first trampoline park regulations

By Alexis Glascock



In February 2012, 30-year-old Ty Thomasson broke his neck at a local trampoline park after diving into a foam pit. Thomasson, who was raised in Scottsdale and attended Chaparral High School, visited SkyPark on Indian School Road and 40th Street with his colleagues from work. His death sparked an examination by the Arizona legislature of the risks to children and adults visiting commercial trampoline parks with no safety regulations.

Across the nation, there has been a rapid rise in the number of trampoline parks, including nine that have opened in Arizona since 2010. Due to the infancy of this industry, there have been no laws in any state passed until April 2014, when Arizona's legislature took action to mandate regulations. Most patrons who enter a commercial trampoline park have an expectation that there are regulations requiring that the equipment meet industry safety standards. However, until Ty's Law was enacted this year, the only requirement to open a trampoline park was that the owner had to obtain a business license.

As a result of this horrific tragedy, the parents of Ty Thomasson, Maureen Kerley and Gary Thomasson, began a quest to protect children and adults from trampoline parks that did not comply with industry and manufacturer safety standards. They called upon State Representative Doug Coleman from Apache Junction to introduce legislation to provide basic protection to the public who patronize trampoline parks. Representative Coleman quickly discovered that there were a serious number of trampoline injuries requiring emergency room care annually.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that in 2000, there were 100,000 emergency room visits resulting from trampoline injuries. In 2010, the number reported was still staggeringly high at 92,200. In contrast to amusement rides, Representative Coleman discovered that there were no requirements that the trampoline parks comply with safety standards. He sought to pass a law to give the public some assurance that trampoline park equipment would meet safety standards. As a result of Representative Coleman's efforts, the Arizona Legislature passed the first law in the U.S. to set safety standards for trampoline parks. It is a law that also had strong support from the trampoline park owners in Arizona and nationally.

In developing the legislation, Representative Coleman also worked

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with the International Association of Trampoline Parks (IATP). In 2013, the ASTM International, formerly American Society for Testing and Materials, developed suggested industry standards with the participation of the IATP. ASTM International is the same organization that develops safety standards for all amusement rides in the U.S. The IATP worked with ASTM International because it wanted to eliminate bad operators who do not follow the safety standards. Poorly constructed equipment at trampoline parks causes serious or fatal injuries, like Thomasson, which makes the public fearful and results in a bad reputation for all trampoline parks. An IATP board member, Ed Reed, summarized the industry's recognition that legislation was needed when he stated, "We believe it protects patrons and the industry. Without it, we think our industry would be in trouble." The IATP has decided to use the Arizona legislation as a model for legislation in other states.

Under the new law, trampoline parks must comply with the following requirements: All parks shall register with the Arizona Department of Fire, Building and Life Safety (the Department) and give proof of a \$1 million bodily injury insurance policy. The law also compels trampoline parks to report to the Department all serious injuries resulting in emergency medical calls. These are listed in a database kept by the Department and made available to the public. Individuals can now research the number of serious injuries at any trampoline park in Arizona. The law further mandates that the Department will make proof of insurance and inspection certificates accessible to the public. Finally, the Department can close any park that does not meet these standards.

In July, when Governor Brewer signed the bill codifying Ty's Law, the parents of Thomasson were present along with the family's trial attorney, Pat McGroder. McGroder stated that Ty's passing will be remembered because it gave rise to new regulations to protect children and adults at trampoline parks in Arizona. McGroder aptly noted, "His legacy is now marked in every trampoline park."

*Alexis Glascock is Of Counsel, Government Affairs & Lobbying at Gallagher & Kennedy. For more information about Ms. Glascock, please visit [www.gknet.com/attorneys/alexisglascock](http://www.gknet.com/attorneys/alexisglascock).*