

CUSTOM TECHNOLOGY

Keeping the Guest Experience Safe with Versatile Wireless Controls

For over 35 years Control Chief has been the pioneer in technology development and product manufacturing for wireless remote control systems. Traditionally used for the railroad, material handling, and automation industries, wireless controls are now gaining momentum within the amusement and entertainment industry. Brian Landries, Outside Sales Manager, with Control Chief explained some of the latest advances in wireless controls along with some potential and current applications in today's industry.

WATERPARKS

One of the more common applications at a waterpark is the use of wireless control to shutdown a water pump in an emergency situation. Wave pools, for instance, benefit greatly from this technology. If a lifeguard sees a swimmer in distress, they are able to quickly and safely shut off the pump that controls the wave action. Eliminating the hazards encountered when using wires near water greatly increases the safety and efficiency of the waterpark.

Many facilities are opting to put fixed safety shutdown stations near lifeguard staffing points. Some facilities choose to equip their personnel with wireless handheld units. Either option allows waterparks to decide which configuration offers the safest, most convenient solution for their particular needs.

Control Chief is finding many waterpark applications are requiring custom-engineered solutions. These custom engineered solutions incorporate the high level of safety requirements that Control Chief's reputation continues to be based upon while maintaining cost effectiveness for the customer.

AMUSEMENT PARKS

As with waterparks, the premise for wireless controls is safety. Control Chief was recently contacted by a company that distributes vintage gas powered, track-guided cars in search of a solution for a potential safety hazard. Aggressive drivers often ignore the rules and create a potentially dangerous situation by turning the vehicles into bumper cars. Control Chief's solution enabled a way to wirelessly reduce the cars throttle and/or cut the engine all together. Another potential hazard averted is when the cars enter the pit area too quickly, the park attendant has the ability to safely limit the speed of each car. This company chose Control Chief because they recognized their progressive advancements in response to the customer's high demand for safety and reliability.



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FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS

As more and more family entertainment centers incorporate automated control into their facility, PLC's (Programmable Logic Controller) are becoming a mainstay for today's technical requirements. Control Chief's contribution to this technology comes through their Communicator® module. The Communicator® is a tightly integrated wireless I/O module developed through Control Chief's Encompass partnership with Rockwell Automation.

Similar to vintage driving cars, bumper boats can also benefit from Control Chief's wireless controls. Existing bumper car engines can be easily retrofitted to allow for wireless control. An operator, overlooking the pond, could throttle down negligent boaters, or reduce the speed of all boats at the end of the session, encouraging riders to return to the docks.

Wireless controls can also be beneficial to facilities that are installing larger rides into indoor areas. Carousels, for instance, often require an expensive electrical main line to run from the operator's booth to the central motor. A wireless control removes that connection, makes installation easier, and eliminates the expense of maintenance.

MUSEUM / THEATERS

As museums start incorporating theatrical experiences into exhibits, but don't necessarily have the staff to manually operate

controls, wireless solutions become attractive. Control Chief has been outfitting professional theaters for years, and can create custom turn-key solutions for museums as well.

A multimedia show that includes various set pieces moving on and off stage can be controlled one of three ways. A wired link can be established, which can be expensive and cumbersome in most applications. Wireless network links can also be established, although they are less precise in executing specific effects or cues, which is often unacceptable in a performance setting. Control Chief's solution employs a wireless controller for the PLC that provides a deterministic communication link ensuring precision control of all automated tasks. In addition, Control Chief's fail-safe design mandates reliability and safety in every application.

A push button or touch screen console makes operation simple, and also allows for manual override when necessary. Additionally, whereas wires do require maintenance over time, a wireless system minimizes maintenance to simple battery upkeep. Control Chief can also hard-wire controllers, eliminating the need for batteries.

As the consumer world becomes more and more wireless, the business world is also moving in that direction. Wireless controls are now setting standards for safety in the amusement industry and beyond, and Control Chief is leading the way. . . .



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