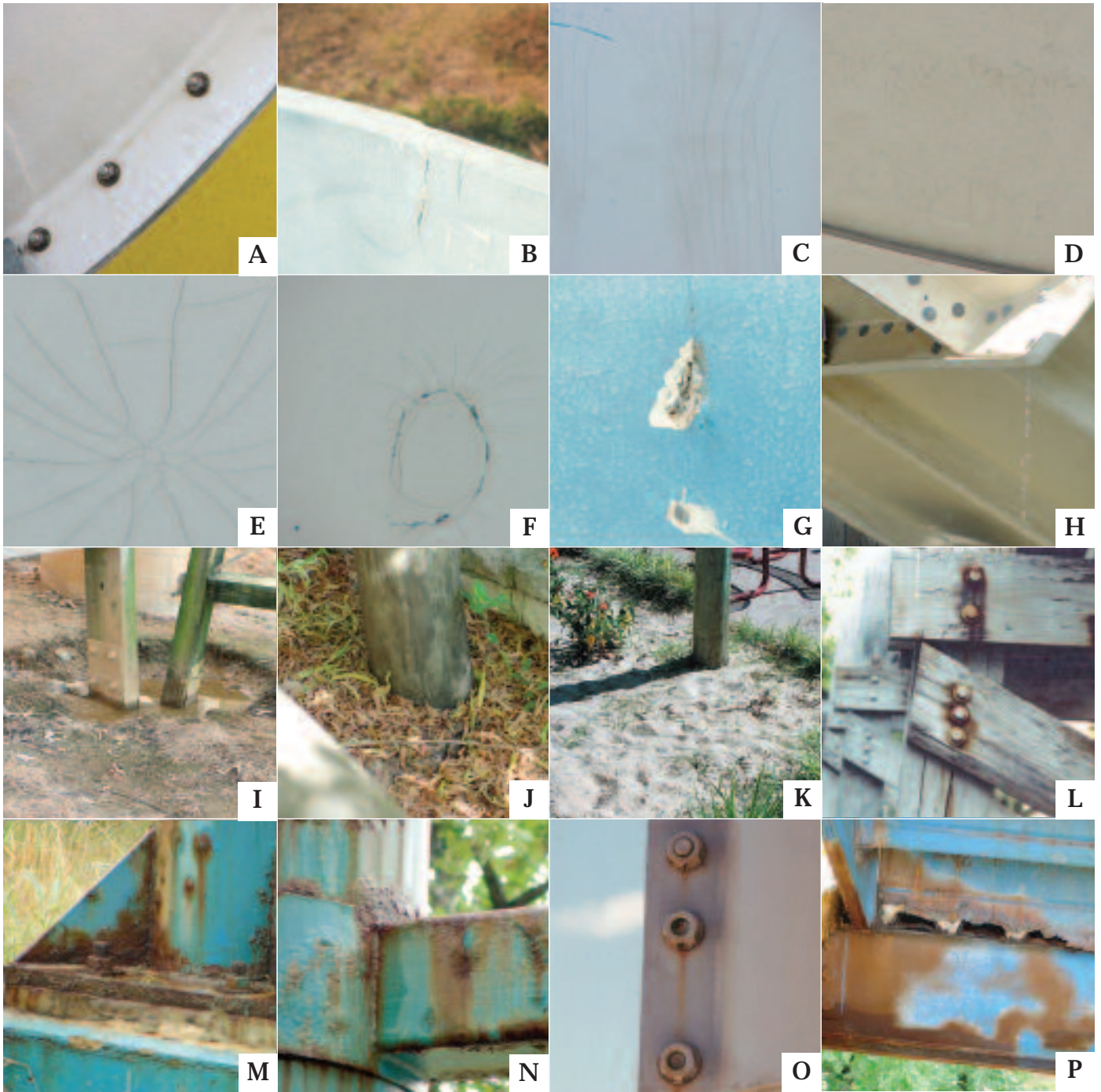


Damage Control



Red Flags

When operators spot anything more than minor chips or leaks, they should call the manufacturer. Here are some red flags:

🚩 Movement in the flume or the joints, or joint separation.

🚩 Signs of "glinting," often seen on older slides. When the gel coat starts to wear down to the fiberglass layer, it exposes the ends of the

fiberglass, which can glint in the sun. This indicates erosion down to the fiberglass resin layer, which doesn't resist water as well as the hard gel coat. This could lead to rapid deterioration of the slide's structural integrity.

🚩 Large "star" cracks in the gel coat, structural cracks in the flume and large, loose gel-coat areas.

A This photo shows a stress crack, distinguished by a brown stripe near the bolts, on the backside of a flume.

B A crack caused by a failed glass joint, as shown in Photo B, usually starts small and grows rapidly. This small flaw can become a big problem.

C Photo C is an example of early stress cracking in the gel coat. This is a common problem on slides of all types.

D Photo D shows surface cracks caused by inappropriate coating over the fiberglass. This defect often looks like chapped skin.

E The classic star crack shown in Photo E is caused by an impact, such as a dropped tool or a sharp blow to the slide. If not fixed, the fiberglass will eventually chip or flake away.

F Staffers should closely monitor the late-appearing manufacturer's defect shown in Photo F. It's as dangerous as it is ugly.

G Photo G shows a failure in a slide joint that was glazed over either by the manufacturer or park staff. These failures always start small, and eventually a piece of fiberglass "blows out" through excessive flexing.

H Photo H shows a typical leak in a slide joint due to a gasket failure. Don't confuse this damage with the typical spill-out on a slide.

I When a footing is below grade, staffers cannot perform a proper inspection. The footing in Photo I sits in a collection hole, exposing the vertical columns to excessive moisture.


J, K Landscaping in Photo J and sand in Photo K hide the footings from the inspector, making it difficult to detect problems.

L The deteriorating, rusted steel bolts and the cracks in the wood structure in Photo L deserve a structural evaluation.

M If not given the proper attention, rusted and corroded steel columns and beams can lead to progressive deterioration of a slide's support structure. Photo M shows rust in the foundation as a result of overhead leaking.

N Photo N shows visible stain lines running down a column. These stains will eventually turn into damaging decay if not dealt with.

O Bolts on the collar in Photo O show signs of water trapped inside. Again, this causing rusting, decay and damage.

P Photo P shows the underside of steel steps following a long period of neglect. This is not only unattractive, but also dangerous. 

Creating a water-slide inspection checklist

Water-slide inspections are essential for managing and maintaining a facility's investments. Consistent, thorough inspections provide safe environments for staff members and assure them that the slides are ready for guests each day.

Daily inspections provide an opportunity for adjustments and corrections to keep the rides operating and in good condition. This simple process helps park personnel quickly identify a leak that developed overnight, an algae bloom that popped up, a sign that was tampered with or a handrail that has become too loose for comfort.

Each inspection point should have a box to check and a comment section to note any discrepancies. Checklists should include the park name, attraction name, date of inspection and inspector's name and signature. Managers should keep all checklists in three-ring binders.

The following are common elements to include in water-slide checklists. This list is not all-inclusive; each park should customize its own checklist to account for specific conditions.

- **Footers:** Must be uncovered and visible for inspection. Check for cracks and other damage.
- **Support structures:** Look for cracks and other damage, as well as any unsecured or compromised supports.
- **Fastener hardware:** See if there's any loose, missing and/or corroded hardware.
- **Fiberglass condition:** Check flumes for cracks, warped areas, sharp edges, loose sections and damages to the gel coat.
- **Seams:** Look for sharp or rough edges, missing caulking and leaks.
- **Water flow:** See that each attraction has the proper water flow.
- **Handrails:** Review all handrails for proper placement, sharp edges and looseness.
- **Decking:** Check for obstructions, cracks, slippery surfaces, sharp edges and protruding nail heads.
- **Walkways:** Look for cracks, obstructions, potential slip spots and sharp edges.
- **Stairs:** Be on the lookout for slip hazards, slick surfaces, and sharp or protruding objects.
- **Fencing:** Check that fencing hasn't been damaged or removed. Watch for sharp edges.
- **Safety equipment:** See that all required and necessary equipment is in the appropriate locations.
- **Water chemistry:** Look for good visibility in the water. Ascertain if all chemical readings are within acceptable levels or not.
- **Signage:** Note that all rules, depth markers and warning signs are properly located and contain applicable content.
- **Pumps and motors:** Make sure that all pumps and motors are operating properly through a visual check and a sound check.
- **Dangerous circumstances:** Visually scan the area for sharp, protruding or overhanging objects that may cause injury to guests and staff.