CHAIR FOR A CHAIR LIFT AND CHAIR LIFT

Inventor: Josef Sutter, Bregenz (AT)

Correspondence Address:
LERNER GREENBERG STEMER LLP
P.O. BOX 2480
HOLLYWOOD, FL. 33022-2480 (US)

Assignee: Innova Patent GmbH, Wolfurt (DE)

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ABSTRACT
A seat part and/or a backrest of a seat differ with regard to the graphical design from the seat part and/or backrest of an adjacently arranged seat. The seat division on the chair is therefore made clear to the passengers, in particular to children. Tracks are arranged on the floor of the entry region of a station of the chair lift, the tracks running below and in accordance with the path of movement of the seats of the chair and being substantially identical in width to the corresponding seats. If the graphical design of the tracks is identical to the graphical design of the corresponding seat, the effect of the chair is reinforced by the unambiguous visual relationship between the track and seat.
CHAIR FOR A CHAIR LIFT AND CHAIR LIFT
CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION


BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0002] The invention relates to a chair of a chair lift having at least two seats with a seat part and a backrest.

[0003] The invention furthermore relates to a chair lift with at least two stations having an entry and exit region. Chairs which are connected to a cable are movable between the stations, and tracks are disposed on the floor of the entry region. The tracks run below and in accordance with a path of movement of the seats of a chair.

[0004] Chair lift stations have an exit and an entry region for the passengers who are to be transported. When a chair enters a station, it passes first through the exit region and then through the entry region. If appropriate, a deflecting region can be provided between the exit and entry regions in order to change the direction of travel of the chair.

[0005] It is known to provide the entry region with at least one conveyor belt which is driven in the direction of travel of the chair.

[0006] Chairs for chair lifts have at least one seat, generally up to eight or more, for example ten, seats located next to one another. In the entry region, there is the risk of a passenger, upon sitting down, not being correctly positioned on the chair and sitting down at least initially on a transition region from one seat to another. One problem in this case is that the adjacent passenger cannot then correctly position himself either. This problem is critical in particular if a passenger wishes to sit on an outer (edge) seat of the chair and there is no longer a sufficient seat surface available to him/her. Another problem is that, if a sitting position is incorrect, it has to be corrected. This problem is critical in particular if the passenger stands up again and shifts his weight forward. In the situations referred to, falls or other accidents may occur. In addition to the direct risk of injury, attention should also be paid to the fact that, when the chair lift is in operation, a chair will again be approaching, which leads to a new hazardous situation if a person who has fallen is lying on the floor in the path of travel of the chair.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] It is accordingly an object of the invention to provide a chair for a chair lift and a chair lift which overcomes the above-mentioned disadvantages of the prior art devices of this general type, with which correct positioning of a passenger when sitting down on the chair is assisted, and risks upon entry to the chair are reduced.

[0008] With the foregoing and other objects in view there is provided, in accordance with the invention a chair of a chair lift. The chair contains at least two seats each having a seat part and a backrest. The seat part and/or the backrest has a graphical design, and the graphical design differs with regard to the graphical design disposed on an adjacent seat part and/or an adjacent backrest.

[0009] The chair according to the invention is characterized in that the seat part and/or the backrest differ/differs with regard to a graphical design from an adjacent seat part and/or from an adjacent backrest. The seat division on the chair is therefore made clear to the passengers, in particular to children. This better distinguishability is advantageous particularly since it assists sitting down in the correct position on a seat of the chair.

[0010] The correct positioning of the passenger on the chair is an important aspect of the safety in the entry region of the station and during the entire journey from one station to another, since the safety measures provided by the manufacturer are focused on a correct sitting position and are at their most effective in a correct sitting position.

[0011] With the chair according to the invention, not only are the risks referred to at the beginning in the entry region avoided, but so too are risks which may occur due to an incorrect sitting position during the closing of the safety bar after the entry region. One such risk, for example, is that a safety panel which is arranged on the safety bar and, in the closed position of the safety bar, should extend in the direction toward the center of the front edge of the particular seat part and be located between the passenger’s thighs, presses onto a thigh when the safety bar is closed. In addition, irrespective of whether a safety panel is or is not present, there is the risk of a passenger’s leg being pinched by a support tube of a foot rest, the support tube extending downwards between a passenger’s legs or between two seats. If the chair according to the invention is equipped with separating elements between the seat parts and, if appropriate, at the outer edge of an outer seat, the separating elements protruding over the upper side of the seat parts, the colored identification of the seat parts and/or of the backrests of the seats affords the further advantage that a collision with the separating elements even as a person sits down on a seat can be avoided.

[0012] The avoidance of hazardous situations per se for passengers is of particular importance in the field of use of the invention. This is particularly the case when children are being transported, since (potential) hazardous situations may result in unforeseeable reactions in particular when children are involved. With the chair according to the invention and the chair lift according to the invention, children can be safely transported with or without an (adult) escort.

[0013] In a preferred embodiment of the invention, a graphical design differing from an adjacent seat part and/or backrest extends over the entire surface area of the upper side of the seat part and/or of the backrest. As an alternative or in addition thereto, graphical designs which extend only partially over the surface of a seat part and/or of a backrest, for example are arranged centrally, can also be provided.

[0014] In a simple embodiment of the invention, the seat part and/or the backrest of a seat is configured in one color, whereas the seat part and/or the backrest of an adjacent seat is configured in another, sufficiently different color. As an alternative or in addition thereto, seat parts and/or backrests having multicolored patterns extending entirely (for example a chequered pattern over the full surface area) or only partially (for example a preferably centrally arranged graphic) over the surface of a seat part and/or a backrest may also be provided.

[0015] The graphical design of a seat is preferably uniform, i.e. the graphical design of the seat part and of the backrest of the seat are identical. As an alternative or in addition thereto, the graphical designs of the seat part and backrest of a seat
may be similar or related to each other. For example, similar or matching graphics, such as pictures, symbols, patterns, logos, for example company logos, mascots, comic figures or the like, are provided on the seat part and on the backrest. Matching graphics which can be related to each other but which are neither identical or similar may be, for example, two comic figures which, although differing visually, are associated with each other.

[0016] In a particularly preferred embodiment of the invention, tracks are arranged on the floor of the entry region, the tracks running below and in accordance with the path of movement of the seat of a chair, wherein one track differs with regard to the graphical design from an adjacent track. The advantage of tracks of this type is that it is unambiguously indicated to the passenger on the floor in the entry region whether he is standing correctly with regard to an approaching seat, since the passenger obtains the visual information that he is standing correctly when his feet are located within the track.

[0017] In the context of the invention, the tracks are substantially identical in width to the corresponding seats. A track of this type may have a central strip. Within the context of the invention, a track of this type may be a conveyor belt.

[0018] If the graphical configuration of the track is identical to the graphical design of the seat part and/or of the backrest of the corresponding seat, the effect of the chair according to the invention is reinforced by the unambiguous visual relationship between the track and the seat. This may also be achieved by the graphical designs of a track and of the seat part and/or of the backrest of a seat being similar or related to each other.

[0019] A graphical design of a seat part and/or of a backrest and/or of a track may be arranged on a support which is connected, such as, for example, adhesively bonded, releasably or non-releasably to the seat part and/or the backrest and/or the track. As an alternative thereto, a graphical design may also be formed directly by the seat part and/or the backrest and/or the track, for example by a surface structure which differs recognizably from the surface structure of the seat part and/or of the backrest and/or of the track arranged next thereto.

[0020] The chair according to the invention may be configured with or without a safety hood.

[0021] In order to prompt children in particular to sit down on a seat in such a manner that a securing part can be positioned between the thighs, in one embodiment of the invention at least one seat part has, in the region of the front edge thereof, a central region which differs with regard to its graphical design from the regions arranged laterally next thereto.

[0022] Other features which are considered as characteristic for the invention are set forth in the appended claims.

[0023] Although the invention is illustrated and described herein as embodied in a chair for a chair lift and a chair lift, it is nevertheless not intended to be limited to the details shown, since various modifications and structural changes may be made therein without departing from the spirit of the invention and within the scope and range of equivalents of the claims.

[0024] The construction and method of operation of the invention, however, together with additional objects and advantages thereof will be best understood from the following description of specific embodiments when read in connection with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING

[0025] FIG. 1 is a diagrammatic, front view of an embodiment of a chair according to the invention; and

[0026] FIG. 2 is a top, plan view of the chair from FIG. 1 in an entry region.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0027] Referring now to the figures of the drawing in detail and first, particularly, to FIG. 1 thereof, there is shown a chair 1 of a chair lift having a safety bar 2 with safety panels 3 as securing parts, which safety bar 2 per se can be configured as customary in the prior art. Therefore, it is merely mentioned in general that the safety bar 2 is disposed on a frame which is connected via a joint to a supporting rod, at the upper end of which a clamping device is provided for fastening the chair 1 to a traction cable. Irrespective thereof, the invention can also be used for different configurations of the chair, in particular chairs which can be coupled. The safety bar 2 may be closed and opened either automatically, with the aid of a mechanism which interacts with a device provided in the stations, or manually by the passengers, and may have various additional securing devices. In addition, the chair 1 may also have a hood.

[0028] Furthermore, it is mentioned in general that the chair 1 has at least two seats 4, in the embodiment according to FIG. 1 eight seats, with a seat part 5 and a backrest 6. In the closed position of the safety bar 2, the safety panels 3 are located in a central region of the seat parts 5 in the region of the front edge thereof and, given a correct position of a passenger, between the thighs of the passenger.

[0029] Chairs 1 are conveyed from a nonilluminated valley station, if appropriate via one or more intermediate stations, to a mountain station and back again with the aid of a closed and encircling traction cable. In the process, the chairs 1 can either be decoupled from the traction cable and coupled thereto again in the stations with a clamping device, or it is also possible to fixedly clamp the chairs 1 to the traction cable.

[0030] In the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, the seats 4, the respective seat part 5 and the respective backrest 6 differ with regard to their graphical design from an adjacent seat 4. The graphical design of the seat part 5 and of the backrest 6 of a seat is identical in each case here. In the chair 1 shown, the seats 4 are each patterned and not patterned in an alternating manner. Since color contrasts reinforce the visual differentiation of the seats 4, the seats 4 are in each case light and dark in an alternating manner.

[0031] To further assist a correct sitting position, separating elements 7 are arranged between the seat parts 5. The separating elements 7 protrude over the upper side of the seat parts 5. The separating elements 7 therefore separate the seat parts 5 not only visually from one another but also have the effect that a passenger notices if he/she sits on a transition region from one seat 4 to another.

[0032] In FIG. 2, the chair 1 from FIG. 1 can be seen in the entry region of a station of a chair lift. Tracks 8 which run below and in accordance with the path of movement of the seats 4 of the chair 1 are arranged on the floor of the entry region. The tracks 8 are tracks 8 which are visually delimited
from one another and are substantially identical in width to the corresponding seats 4. The graphical design of each track 8 corresponds to the graphical design of the corresponding seat 4. In this embodiment, a passenger can see particularly readily where to stand in the entry region in order to be correctly seated on a seat 4. The tracks 8 are preferably provided on a conveyor belt.

In summary, an exemplary embodiment of the invention can be described as follows:

The seat part 5 and/or the backrest 6 of a seat 4 differ with regard to the graphical design from the seat part 5 and/or backrest 6 of an adjacently arranged seat 4. The seat division on the chair 1 is therefore made clear to the passengers, in particular to children.

Tracks 8 are arranged on the floor of the entry region of a station of the chair lift, the tracks running below and in accordance with the path of movement of the seats 4 of the chair 1 and being substantially identical in width to the corresponding seats 4. If the graphical design of the tracks 8 is identical to the graphical design of the corresponding seat 4, the effect of the chair 1 according to the invention is reinforced by the unambiguous visual relationship between the track and seat 4.

1. The chair of a chair lift, comprising:
   at least two seats each having a seat part and a backrest, at least one of said seat part and said backrest having a graphical design, said graphical design differing with regard to said graphical design disposed on at least one of an adjacent said seat part and an adjacent said backrest.

2. The chair according to claim 1, wherein said graphical design extends at least partially over an upper side of at least one of said seat part and said backrest.

3. The chair according to claim 1, wherein said graphical design of said seat part and of said backrest of a respective seat is identical.

4. The chair according to claim 1, wherein said graphical design of said seat part and said graphic design of said backrest of a respective seat are one of similar and related to each other.

5. The chair according to claim 1, further comprising:
   a safety bar; and
   securing parts disposed on said safety bar, said securing parts extending in a direction toward a center of a front edge of said seat part in a closed position of said safety bar.

6. The chair according to claim 1, further comprising:
   a support tube; and
   a footrest disposed on said safety bar by means of said support tube, said support tube extending in a central region in front of said seat downward from said safety bar to said footrest.

7. The chair according to claim 1, further comprising separating elements which protrude over an upper side of said seat parts and are disposed between said seat parts.

8. The chair according to claim 1, wherein said seat parts and/or said backrests that differ with regard to said graphical design from said adjacent seat part and/or said adjacent backrest have different surface structures.

9. The chair according to claim 1, wherein said seat part has, in a region of a front edge thereof, a central region which differs with regard to said graphical design from regions arranged laterally thereto.

10. The chair according to claim 5, wherein said securing parts are safety panels.

11. A chair lift, comprising:
   at least two stations each having an entry region with a floor and an exit region;
   a cable;
   chairs connected to said cable and movable between said stations, at least one of said chairs having at least two seats each with a seat part and a backrest, at least one of said seat part and said backrest having a graphical design, said graphical design differing with regard to said graphical design disposed on at least one of an adjacent said seat part and an adjacent said backrest; and
   tracks disposed on said floor of said entry region, said tracks running below and in accordance with a path of movement of said seats of said chair.

12. The chair lift according to claim 11, wherein one of said tracks differs with regard to a further graphical design from an adjacently disposed track.

13. The chair lift according to claim 11, wherein said tracks are substantially identical in width to corresponding ones of said seats.

14. The chair lift according to claim 11, wherein said tracks have a central strip.

15. The chair lift according to claim 11, wherein said tracks are conveyor belts.

16. The chair lift according to claim 12, wherein said further graphical design of said track and said graphical design of at least one of said seat part and said backrest of a corresponding seat are identical.

17. The chair lift according to claim 12, wherein said further graphical design of said track and said graphical design of at least one of said seat part and said backrest of a corresponding seat are one of similar and related to each other.

18. The chair lift according to claim 12, wherein said further graphical design differing from an adjacently disposed track extends at least partially over an upper side of said track.