

GUIDANCE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY AROUND PLAY INFLATABLES

Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk



INTRODUCTION

Following serious incidents which have occurred in recent years regarding inflatables; we have produced this leaflet to provide information to help avoid serious incidents whether you supply, buy, or hire inflatables such as bouncy castles, for commercial purposes. It does not apply to private or domestic buyers and users.

GENERAL INFORMATION

As a business you have a responsibility to keep both employees and members of the public safe, this leaflet will help you to comply with legal requirements.

TYPES OF INFLATABLES

Sealed Inflatables – are generally inflatables that once inflated do not then have a continuous air supply to them. This includes, trampolines, mobile base units for water walkers or battery boats, crash barriers for battery-operated bumper car devices or go-karts, floating static platforms, climbing and jumping frames.

Continuous Flow Units – require a pump or fan to be connected to the inflatable via a tube. The inflatable will require a constant air source, as air leaks through the seams of the inflatable and would deflate without the continuous air source. Most bouncy castles and inflatables that are jumped on will be a continuous flow unit.

INSPECTION SCHEMES

The HSE supports two industry inspection schemes run by PIPA and ADiPs. Inspections should be completed annually to ensure that the inflatable complies with the British Standard (BS EN 14960:2013).

Most inflatables will display a PIPA or ADiPs declaration to show they comply with the British Standard. If there is no evidence, you may be risking people's safety. To check that the tag conforms to health and safety standards visit the websites:

- www.pipa.org.uk
- www.adips.co.uk

There may be some inflatables that are either legacy play equipment, or of unknown origin (e.g. imported from outside the United Kingdom, historical equipment, or other items with no identification markings). The operator of such equipment should make sure that the inflatable has been through

a suitable design review, has an up-to-date in-service inspection record and is safe for use.

All second-hand inflatables must be provided with maintenance records, details of any modifications, significant repairs etc.

PLAN AHEAD WHEN BUYING INFLATABLE EQUIPMENT

Plan ahead to consider whether you are going to hire, rent or buy your own equipment. The types of things to think about before getting inflatable equipment are:

- Have you ensured that you have sufficient space for operation?
- Do you have adequate insurance?
- Have you carefully read the operations manual?

COMPETENCY OF ORGANISERS, SUPERVISORS AND OPERATORS OF INFLATABLE PLAY EQUIPMENT

The organiser, supervisor and operator must be aware of the safe operation of inflatable play equipment. The inflatable itself must be under constant supervision by at least one suitably trained person, which may be the organiser, a supervisor or an operator. (One person may be all of these things.) Remember if you have multiple inflatables, you are more likely to need a member of staff at each device to ensure suitable and sufficient supervision.

To demonstrate competence, the suitably trained person must be able to provide evidence of training in the safe set-up, operation, and roll down of inflatable play equipment. The RPII (Register of Play Inspectors International) register lists trained operator/attendants www.playinspectors.com which can also be checked prior to an event.

The suitably trained person should:

- Constantly supervise equipment and members of the public if necessary
- Carry out regular checks of anchorage points to see if they are all in good condition
- Monitor weather and wind speed throughout operation (outside inflatables)
- Ensure anyone intoxicated is not allowed on the inflatable equipment
- Ensure the removal of shoes, empty pockets of any sharp items.

- Ensure the amount of people using the bouncy castle should not exceed the recommended amount of stated in the operations manual
- On busy days you may want to implement a rota system for children, ensuring that you don't exceed maximum numbers
- Manage the behaviour of users – do not allow bad behaviour such as climbing walls, acrobatics or having food and drink on the inflatable.
- Conduct regular pressure tests to ensure that the pressure doesn't increase. Especially on hot day (this is more relevant for darker colour inflatables and sealed inflatables).

SETTING UP SAFELY

Weather conditions

Always check your operations manual to confirm the maximum wind speed to ensure safe operation of the inflatable:

- No inflatable should be used in winds above 24mph (the wind speed should be measured using an anemometer).
- Do not use a smart phone weather application to measure wind speeds as they may not be accurate.

Anchorage

- All outdoor inflatables must have at least six anchor points which are evenly distributed. If the operations manual states more anchor points, that's how many should be used.
- Metal ground stakes of at least 380mm long and 16mm wide with a rounded top must be used, they should be angled and driven into the ground. (On soft ground). They should also not become a trip hazard; and before securing them, think about whether there is anything beneath the ground you need to be aware of.
- If ground stakes cannot be used because of the surface (e.g. tarmac), use ballast with anchor points each weighing at least 163 kg or be capable of withstanding 1600N, with suitable fixings to attach to each anchor point. The rope for securing the anchor points should have a diameter between 18-45mm. The inflatable should be tightly secured to the ground so that the wind cannot get beneath and lift it.
- For indoor inflatable refer to the operator's manual which will provide instruction on what anchorage is necessary to maintain the shape of the device and prevent overturning.

Structure

- Make sure anchorage ropes aren't damaged or fraying.
- There should not be any obvious signs of over tension or sagging of the structure such as rips in fabric or seems.
- The structure of the inflatable walls should be strong and high enough and be attached to the base to prevent users from injury.
- Impact absorbing mats should be used on the ground at any open side of the bouncy castle and extend a sufficient distance forward to ensure sufficient protection to people falling from bouncy castle.
- Domestic electrical leads may not be acceptable for outside use – make sure there aren't any defects such as electrical tape, wires showing or broken plugs. Hazards can include tripping on cables and electrocution.

Air Blowers

The inflatable's structure should be designed so that members of the public cannot touch or interfere with the blower, meaning that the blower should not be sited internally unless it is part of a structure not used for playing.

There should be a mesh guard over the blade, and it should be free of debris and dirt. The blade must not be damaged, worn or missing any parts.

Blowers should be positioned at least 1.2metres from walled sides and 2.5metres from an open side, therefore check the length of the connection tube is adequate.

CLOSING DOWN

When closing down, the operator's manual should be followed in the deflation of inflatable equipment.

The area should be restricted to prevent any public access during deflation to avoid the risk of injury.

FURTHER INFORMATION

PIPA - Securing Inflatables on hard Standing Outdoors Guidance: Information Sheets & Technical Bulletins (pipa.org.uk)

HSE bouncy castles - www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/fairgrounds/inflatables.htm

HSE sealed inflatables - www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/fairgrounds/inflatables/index.htm

HSE HGS175 - www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg175.htm

INFLATABLES CHECKLIST

This checklist can be used when hiring or using your own inflatable device.

Checks	Seen/comments
Prior to event:	
Public Liability insurance	
Copy of most recent in service annual inspection report or Declaration of Operational Compliance (DOC) which must not be over 12 months old	
Training details of operators/supervisors/attendants Are there any specific training records?	
Risk assessments/method statements	
Type of anemometer to be used with copy of record sheet	
Copy of set-up check sheet	
Copy of operating manual	
Operators contact details in case of emergency	
During set-up	
Operating manual available or where rented a safe use document to be provided by hirer.	
Set-up check sheet in use	
Anemometer available	
Name of attendant? ID check? Age check? Does this match training records?	
Check of inflatable in good condition (any repairs will be accompanied with a repair report)	
Blower/fans and inflatable are the same as operating manual and test certificates	
Correct controls on impact area	
Where rented has a verbal handover to the client been provided to ensure that they understand how to operate the unit safely?	

During event (ensure any issues are recorded and action taken to remedy the problem).

Same attendant?			
If different, name of attendant?	ID check?	Age check?	Does this match training records?
Set up check sheet fully completed?			
Visual check of inflatable – any obvious defects?	1st check	2nd check	3rd check
Recent wind readings?			
Operating manual being followed?			
All anchor points being used and are secure			
People management (Correct number of users, not wearing shoes or glasses, no sharp objects)			
Correct controls on impact area			
Electrical cables safe installation			
Blower connected correctly			
Fencing erected correctly			
Generator/petrol blower safely protected			
Spare fuel safely stored			

Notes:

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____