



Advice on the safe use and operation of play inflatables



A play inflatable or bouncy castle can be a popular attraction at an event. Whilst being a great source of fun, accidents have happened in the past so a few common sense controls need to be in place.

The equipment should be hired from a reputable company. Wherever possible the equipment should be set up, operated and supervised by the hire company's own staff.

Before hiring, check:

- The hire company fully complies with industry guidance on the safe use and operation of play inflatables (such as guidance provided by www.pipa.org.uk)
- Operating staff are over 18, well trained and suitably experienced.

The inflatable must be subject to annual inspection by a competent person from an approved body (Pertexa Inflatable Play Accreditation (PIPA) or Amusement Device Inspection Scheme (ADIPS)) and the hire operator must provide evidence of this. Additional checks must be carried out every time the equipment is used to ensure its safe operation.

The following are key areas which must be managed by anyone operating a play inflatable:

Anchorage: must be in accordance guidance from the manufacturer and sufficient in number to withstand any operational or wind loading. Fixings must be intact and all anchorages provided must be used. Stakes must be suitable for ground conditions. If ballast is used, it must be sufficient to adequately secure the device.

Access/egress: safety mats should be provided at hard surfaces on access points to the equipment.

Blowers: the correct blower specified for the device must be used to maintain adequate air pressure. The electrical installation for this must be sound, in good condition and suitable for outside use. Any generator must be located safely/guarded and fuel stored appropriately

(discourage use of petrol). Guards must be fixed over the air inlets and outlet and the blower inflation tube connection must be in good condition and remain firmly fixed to blower. The blower must be positioned away from the device adequately protected or guarded and not a trip hazard.

Materials: there must be no holes or rips in the fabric or seams and a ground sheet must be used on rough, abrasive or dirty surfaces.

Safe operation: the equipment must be sited away from hazards such as overhead power lines or sharp projections. The equipment must be used in accordance with manufactures guidelines for wind tolerance and specifically must not be used in in windy or wet weather. Facility must be provided to monitor local weather conditions. The device must be monitored constantly for signs which may cause accidental deflation including due to power failures or faults affecting the blower.

Supervision: the equipment must be supervised constantly to ensure safe rules for use are enforced (remove footwear and any dangerous, sharp, or hard objects; no food or drink or chewing gum; no climbing on the structure; conformity with height restrictions; keep access clear; keep users off when inflating/deflating; no somersaults or rough play; control of numbers to prevent overcrowding; separation of age groups) Where necessary, particularly if large crowds are present, barriers need to be provided to enclose the device and prevent access.

Checklist for event organisers:

Issue	Action
Suitable risk assessment & evidence of public liability insurance	
PIPA/ADIPS certificate provided	
Constant supervision	
Adequate anchorage & in use checks	
Adequate adverse weather monitoring & action plan	
Adequate guarding & storage of ancillary equipment	
Device in suitable safe location	
Details provided for maximum number of users & suitable arrangements for enforcement of rules (age/height, numbers, behaviours, etc.)	

Please contact the Commercial & Business Support Team on 01327 322281 or health.protection@southnorthants.gov.uk if you need any further advice or information.