



## HIRING A BOUNCY CASTLE OR INFLATABLE?



Over recent years serious incidents have occurred where inflatables have collapsed or blown away in windy conditions.

These simple precautions can help you avoid serious incidents if you are hiring one for an event or will be operating them at your event.

There is expected to be a significant increase on the use of inflatable play equipment this year at street parties etc particularly to celebrate the Queens Jubilee in June 2022, this guidance will be of assistance to the hirers and organisers of such events to ensure safety.

Health and Safety law applies to the supply, hire and use of inflatables for commercial purposes. It does not apply to private, domestic buyers and users.



## WHOSE RESPONSIBLE?

Putting up the inflatable is the company supplying the equipment to you.

After that... **It's you.**

Once the operator has set up the bouncy castle/inflatable and left your site then you, as the hirer you become fully responsible for everyone using the bouncy castle and fully liable for any accidents, therefore you must supervise the bouncy castle at all times.

It is strongly advised that you book your inflatable with a reputable company.

- Check their reviews.
- Speak to others who have booked an inflatable.
- Check if the company is a member of any association to do with hiring inflatables.

## WHAT NEXT?

### Does the inflatable have a valid, in-date test certificate and does it have a PIPA tag?

Just like outdoor playgrounds and indoor soft-play centres, play inflatables should be tested and inspected every year by a competent person.

There are two industry inspection schemes for inflatables run by PIPA and ADiPs.

Most play inflatables will therefore display either a numbered PIPA tag or an ADiPs Declaration of Compliance (DoC) to show they comply with British Standard BS EN 14960.

Make sure the inflatable you are hiring has a PIPA tag prominently displayed. Alternatively, the inflatable might have a DoC. The PIPA tag has a number on it which can be fed into the PIPA website ([pipa.org.uk](http://pipa.org.uk)) to check when the inflatable was last inspected.

It only takes a few minutes to check...

**DO NOT** hire an inflatable unless it has been inspected during the last 12 months and passed the stringent test.

### Insurance?

Every inflatable operator must have suitable and sufficient insurance cover in place, including Public Liability Insurance with a minimum cover level of £5 million.

They should be happy to show their certificate to the hirer at the point of booking or at the event itself.

As a hirer, you are not required by law to take out your own insurance but you may wish to take out Personal Liability Insurance in the event that you are held liable if someone sustains an injury. This may already be part of your home insurance policy, so it is always good to check your documents.



# AT YOUR EVENT

## What to do on the day

Before the inflatable is used, ask yourself the following questions to ensure your guests have a safe and enjoyable experience.

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### Is the weather suitable for safe use of the inflatable?

It is very important that the inflatable is not set up in too windy or too wet weather as it could blow away or cause people to slip. The wind speed must be no more than Force 5 on the Beaufort scale (24 mph or 38 km/h) which is when small trees in leaf begin to sway.

The operator should have checked the weather forecast and measured the wind speed with an anemometer (wind speed indicator) before setting up the inflatable but you should monitor for an increase in wind speed during your event. If it is very hot, the inflatable should be set up in shade, if possible.

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### Has the equipment been set up properly?

The inflatable must be set up on reasonably flat ground and must be anchored down correctly using all the anchor-points provided. Each play inflatable has a minimum of 6 anchor-points but, no matter how many there are, they must all be used.

If setting up on grass or other soft surface, the operator must use metal stakes of 16mm diameter and 380mm length. If on a hard surface where stakes cannot be used, a weight of 163kgs must be attached to each anchor-point. Periodically, during the event, check that all the anchorages are still secure.

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### Are there enough safety mats?

There should be safety mats on the ground across every entrance or break in the walls of the inflatable if it is sited on a hard surface although this might not be necessary on soft ground. The mats should be no more than 50mm thick and should cover the whole of the ground where there is an opening in the walls of the inflatable to a minimum distance of 1.2m.

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### How many users can there be at one time?

The number of users allowed can be found written or printed on the inflatable and in the instruction leaflet if you have been given one. Make sure that this number is not exceeded at any time.

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### Can the inflatable(s) to be supervised at all times?

Once the operator leaves your house or event, you are responsible and liable for the safety of all the users. The users must always be closely supervised when they are on the inflatable. It is very important for the safety of the users that a responsible adult (16 years of age or over and able to exercise some authority over the users) supervises the use of the inflatable all of the time it is in use.



## Did the operator do a final check of the equipment and explain everything to you?

It is important for the safety of the users that you take note of these final instructions which should have included what to do in the event of something going wrong. It could be that anchorages will work loose, the inflatable might move, the wind might strengthen, internal pressure might reduce.

Keep the telephone number of the operator handy so that you can get help quickly and be ready to summon an ambulance in case of serious injury to anyone.

## Have I instructed the Supervisor(s) sufficiently?

Be sure that everyone who is likely to be called on to be the Supervisor during the day has received instruction. Lack of adequate supervision causes many of the accidents on inflatables.

Furnish each Supervisor with a whistle with which to attract the attention of the users.

In particular:

- a) Check that the number of users allowed on at one time does not exceed the number on the inflatable. Better to allow fewer than to allow more.
- b) Separate larger users from smaller ones.
- c) Before allowing anyone on, it is essential that the Supervisor talks to the users about keeping each other safe. Include instructions such as **NO SOMERSAULTS, NO ROUGH PLAY, NO CLIMBING ON THE WALLS** and that **OLDER USERS LOOK AFTER YOUNGER ONES**.
- d) Check that users have removed shoes, jewellery such as necklaces, anything hard or sharp in their pockets or on their clothes.
- e) Check they have no food or drink with them.
- f) Keep users away from the step.  
The step is for mounting and alighting.
- g) Keep onlookers off the safety mats.  
Make them stand back.
- h) Keep other attractions away from the inflatable e.g. barbecue, food table etc.
- i) Use the whistle and shout 'STOP' to attract the attention of the users in the event of an incident of misbehaviour or an accident on the inflatable.



## CONTACT DETAILS

For further advice please contact the Health and Safety Team on:

@ [health.safety@eastriding.gov.uk](mailto:health.safety@eastriding.gov.uk)

 [eastriding.gov.uk](http://eastriding.gov.uk)