

BOUNCY CASTLES AND INFLATABLES OPERATOR GUIDANCE

Inspections

The inflatable and its accessories must have undergone an annual test by a competent person and passed as complying with the European Standard BS EN 14960 - 1:2019 Inflatable play equipment - safety requirements and test methods. The PUWER regulations make this a legal requirement.

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

PIPA Tag

Make sure that the PIPA tag is visible on the structure and, if the hirer asks, show them the inspection number and direct them to the PIPA website where they are able to check the inspection date themselves if they wish - www.pipa.org.uk

Risk Assessment

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, owners or operators of inflatable devices need to carry out a risk assessment of their activities to determine the control measures needed to avoid risk or reduce risk to an acceptable level. The manufacturer's information and instructions for safe operation should be used as the basis for this.

Instructions

Each bouncy castle should come with an instruction manual on how to operate it as certain parts may vary depending on the type of inflatable. In addition, this manual should contain information relating to the maximum wind speed for the operation of that bouncy castle. You must read and familiarise yourself with these instructions before use.

Safe Handling

- Inflatables can be very heavy and require some care in their handling if injuries are not to be caused. The first requirement for safe handling is that the inflatable was folded and rolled properly after its last use. It can then be handled and easily moved into the dedicated transport.
- Do not try to lift a complete inflatable. Lift only one end at a time.
- When loading a petrol blower after an event, be careful not to burn yourself on the exhaust and ensure you have turned off the petrol supply.



SETTING UP OUTDOORS

1. Choose Your Site

- The site must be big enough to accommodate the equipment, bearing in mind the open space needed at front and sides and the length of the blow-tube.
 - The site must be level or have a slope of not more than five degrees in any direction.
 - The inflatable must be sited well away from possible hazards such as overhead power lines or other obstacles with hazardous projections (e.g. fences and/or trees).
 - The site must be cleared of debris and sharp objects on, or embedded in, the surface.
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2. Check the wind

- The wind-speed must be no more than Force 5 on the Beaufort scale (maximum 24 mph/ 38 km/h).
 - On the morning of the event and the night before, listen carefully to the weather forecast so that you have a good idea of what wind to expect.
 - On the day and during the event, you should check the wind-speed continually using an anemometer (not a Smartphone).
 - Position and roll out the inflatable correctly and ensure all 'siting rules have been observed.
 - Anchor the castle down temporarily. If ropes form part of the anchorage system, attach them to the anchor-points.
 - The windward side of the inflatable needs to be anchored temporarily while it is inflating so drive industry standard 380mm long x 16mm wide metal anchor-stakes into the ground on the windward side and loosely tie on the windward side ropes.
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3. Blowers

Blowers should be suitably guarded at inlet and outlet. The user should not be able to contact the blower unit. Blowers must stand 1.2m away or 2.5m away from the inflatable. Blowers should not be sited internally unless they are in a part of the structure not used for playing and out of possible contact by the user.

4. Inflate

- Ensure all electrical equipment is suitable for outdoor use.
 - Check that you have the correct size and type of blower and attach it securely to the blow-tube.
 - Switch on the blower and allow the inflatable to inflate fully.
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5. Anchorage in an impact area

- Anchor the inflatable down permanently using every anchorage point on the inflatable
- The metal stakes should be driven into the ground slightly inclined away from the inflatable and the ropes or webbings should not be pulled too tight. The metal ground stakes must be at least 380mm long x 16mm wide, with a rounded top. They should have a welded metal 'O' or 'D' ring fitted to the end and should protrude no more than 25mm above the ground.
- Adjust the position of the blower - it needs to be moved as far away from the inflatable as the blow-tube will allow and then moved forward 50mm. It must stand at least 1.2m away from a walled inflatable or 2.5m away from a flatbed.

6. Internal Pressure

- Check the working pressure - you can check the pressure is sufficient inside the inflatable by using a manometer.
 - If you are using a petrol engine blower, regulate the speed of the engine so that the internal pressure is not too great.
 - An electric blower does not need regulating but you must use an RCD circuit breaker.
 - If you are using a petrol engine blower, take great care and ensure everyone is away when you re-fuel.
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7. Do you need mats at the entrance?

- If the grass or earth is hard you will need landing mats on the ground all around the entrance/exit. If it is soft and not abrasive, it may not be necessary to use landing mats.
 - Landing mats should cover the whole area around the entrance/exit of the inflatable. They should extend out 1.2m and should be no more than 2 inches thick. The mats should not move when the inflatable is in use.
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SETTING UP OUTDOORS ON A HARD STANDING

Anchoring

- On hard standing, you will be unable to anchor with stakes driven into the ground.
 - Use ballast with anchor-points each weighing at least 163kg and with suitable fixings to attach the guy ropes. The inflatable should be tightly secured to the ground so that the wind cannot get underneath it.
 - Use landing mats covering the whole of the area around the entrance/exit.
 - Protect the base - if the hard standing is abrasive, you must use a groundsheet under the inflatable.
 - Keep the blower still and in position by standing it on a rubber mat.
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SETTING UP INDOORS

- Check the site is suitable - that there is enough floor-space on which the inflatable can stand with its blowtube fully extended and that there is plenty of space (3.5m) where the users get on and off.
 - The height of the ceiling must be sufficient to allow the inflatable to inflate fully without touching and high enough to prevent users from touching the ceiling or any other fittings such as lights.
 - Does the inflatable need anchoring? Even indoors the inflatable could move across the floor and it could overturn.
 - Sideways movement can be counteracted by placing rubber mats under the inflatable.
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Protecting the base

If the floor is not abrasive, there will be no need to use a groundsheet under the inflatable.

Landing mats

You will need to use landing mats to cover the whole of the impact area.

Where is the impact area?

The impact area is the area of ground immediately next to any open side of the inflatable and it extends to 1.2m away

ROUTINE INSPECTION

When the inflatable is ready, complete a routine inspection sheet, sign it, date it and keep it safe.

Here are the main items you should now check again:

1. The site is level enough? No overhead wires/trees? Plenty of clear space around the inflatable?
2. All of the anchorages are in place and secure?
3. Landing mats, if needed, are in position?
4. No significant rips or holes in the fabric and seams?
5. Internal pressure sufficient?
6. Correct blower?
7. Firmly connected to the blow-tube?
8. Blow-tube at its furthest extent; less than 50mm?
9. No exposed electrical parts or wires?
10. No damage to switches, plugs, sockets?
11. Cables routed out of harm's way?
12. Mesh guards intact on the blower?
13. Petrol cap on?
14. Petrol can in its secure store hidden from view?
15. All electrical equipment is suitable for outdoor use?
16. Electrical reels fully unwound?

Correct any faults before allowing the inflatable to be used.

Repairs must not be carried out while the equipment is being used.

OPERATING

1. Who's who?

Operators and attendants need to be identifiable and the operator needs to carry a visible whistle if supervising the inflatable during use at a private home or event.

2. Establish a system of use

If you are managing and supervising the inflatable, first establish the maximum number and maximum height of users which is prominently shown on the inflatable so that everyone can see it.

- Work out a system whereby the users can be 'put on' in a controlled and safe manner and use a timer that everyone can see and hear.
- Brief the hirer if you are leaving the inflatable on the system of use and how to contact you in an emergency.

- Keep the 3.5m in front of the entrance/exit clear of coats, shoes, bags, money glasses etc.
 - Separate users into groups of approximately the same height, up to the maximum height to go on together.
 - After a couple of hours, it's policy to close the castle for five minutes:
 1. To take a breather.
 2. To top up the petrol in the blower.
 3. To check that the anchorages are still secure.
 4. To empty money out of the cash-bag which is growing heavy.
 5. To check that everything else is still good - anchorages, fence, etc.
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3. Handover to the hirer

If you are leaving the private event, you must brief the person who has hired the inflatable and complete a thorough handover. This must include your contact details in case of an emergency and run through the following points with them before leaving. This is very important.

1. Exercise constant supervision - Research shows that 73 per cent of adults in the UK don't know that they are fully responsible for users on the inflatable after you leave. 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.
 2. The hirer must admit users in a controlled and safe manner.
 3. The hirer must also restrict the maximum height of user and the maximum number of users.
 4. The hirer must separate users into groups of approximately the same height.
 5. Ensure the users remove shoes, necklaces, gum, bags, purses, and anything hard or sharp.
 6. The hirer must also ask spectacle wearers if they can manage without - if not, warn the other users.
 7. The hirer should ensure the surrounding area is kept clear.
 8. The hirer must stop users from playing on the step or playing too roughly.
 9. The hirer must tell users not to do somersaults or climb or hang on the containing walls.
 10. The hirer must contact you in the event of an accident or injury.
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4. Emergencies

- In the event of a power failure, blow whistle and shout 'STOP'. Then assist each user to get off.
- Immediately investigate the problem - if it is a quick solution then the castle can inflate, and users get on again.
- In the event of a storm or squall blowing up where the wind feels too strong, stop the session, and check the wind speed with your anemometer.
- Get the castle deflated as quickly as possible and resume when the bad weather has passed. Use of the castle in light rain or drizzle is possible if the castle is fitted with a shower-cover which keeps the bouncing surface dry. However, if the bouncing surface gets wet, stop the session as slipping and sliding users can injure themselves and others.
- In the event of an injury to a user on the castle, stop the users bouncing immediately and investigate the injury.
- If it is a minor injury such as a bruise, get the user off while he/she recovers.

- If the injury is more serious, the operator should stay with the injured user while the attendant evacuates the others, finds the injured user's relative/parent/friend in the crowd, and sends someone off to get the relevant emergency service. After the injured user has been treated/removed, the operator must make written notes of the time of the accident, what happened, the size and number of users on the castle at the time, the type of injury and any other relevant information. This is important as the information may be needed if the injury is serious enough to warrant the Controller reporting the accident to the authorities

www.hse.gov.uk/riddor

CHECKLIST IN THE EVENT OF A SERIOUS ACCIDENT

1. Evacuate users from the inflatable.
2. Make the injured person comfortable.
3. Find the injured person's relative/parent/friend.
4. Send for St. John's Ambulance, Red Cross, doctor or competent person to give first aid.
5. Write down the circumstances of the accident. Note the date, time, number of users.
6. Take names and addresses of witnesses.
7. Note the names of the operator and attendants on duty at the time.
8. Notify the Controller that an accident has occurred.

PUTTING THE EQUIPMENT AWAY

1. Before deflating the castle, all users and onlookers must be out of the way.
2. Follow the instructions for deflating the castle and rolling it up into a manageable shape.
3. Leave the anchorages connected until the castle is flat but when you disconnect them do not leave stakes in the ground because a) you will lose them and b) you will trip over them.
4. If you have been using a petrol blower, make sure the petrol tap is turned off and the exhaust has cooled down before storing it.

CONTACT DETAILS

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

 health.safety@eastriding.gov.uk

 eastriding.gov.uk