



SAFE USE OF INFLATABLES GUIDANCE FOR SMALL ORGANISATIONS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC



Hiring inflatable amusement devices from a third party

Ensure you use a reputable company when you hire an inflatable amusement device. Check the company reviews, speak to others who have used them, check if the company is a member of a trade or professional association for hiring inflatables (e.g. BIHA). Before booking you should ask the following questions and receive satisfactory answers.

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

Make sure the inflatable you are hiring has a PIPA tag prominently displayed (as illustrated) or a 'Declaration of Operational Compliance' issued by ADIPS (The Amusement Device Inspection Procedures Scheme). A PIPA tag or DOC is issued after thorough inspection of the equipment. The PIPA tag has a number on it which can be checked on the PIPA website (pipa.org.uk) to identify when the inflatable was last inspected. It only takes a few minutes to check.



Has the hire company completed any formal training?

Completion of formal training provided by an organisation such as the Register of Play Inspectors International (RPII) illustrates that the hire company is competent and aware of how to correctly manage and operate inflatable play equipment safely. More information can be found at www.pipa.org.uk/files/BounceSafeLeaflet.pdf

Does the hire company have valid insurance?

Every inflatable operator that hires equipment must have suitable and sufficient insurance cover in place, including public liability Insurance with a minimum cover of £5 million. They should be able to show you their certificate at the point of booking or delivery. As a customer you are not required by law to take out your own insurance, but you may wish to take out personal liability insurance in case you are held liable for a person's injury. This may already be part of your home insurance policy, so you should check your documents beforehand.

Has the equipment been cleaned and disinfected?

Ask for details on cleaning and whether the inflatable has been used at another event before being supplied to you. The inflatable amusement device should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to being supplied for your booking.

What to do on the day

When hiring an inflatable device you are responsible for the safety of your guests on the inflatable after the operator leaves. Before the inflatable is used, ask yourself the following questions to ensure your guests have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Is the weather suitable for the safe use of inflatables?

The inflatable should not be set up if too windy or too wet weather as the device could blow away or cause people to slip. The windspeed must not exceed 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 windspeed with an anemometer (wind speed indicator) before setting up the inflatable. You should also check for increasing wind speeds during your event. If the weather is very hot, the inflatable should be set up in shade, wherever possible.

Has the equipment been set up properly?

The inflatable must be set up on reasonably flat ground and anchored down correctly using all 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 anchorages remain secure.

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 sited on a hard surface. 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, and up to a distance of 1.2m.

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.

Have I made provision for supervision at all times?

Once the operator leaves your house or event, you are responsible and liable for the safety of all users. Ensure all supervisors has received instruction, We recommend supervisors use a whistle to attract the attention of the others in the event of an emergency. Rules of play and safe use should be communicated to users prior to use. Supervision is recommended at all times as a lack of adequate supervision causes many accidents on inflatables.

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 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.

Useful information - pipa.org.uk

Bouncy castles and other play inflatables: safety advice (hse.gov.uk)

A guide to bouncy castle and inflatable hire safety - ADIPS Privacy Policy - Bouncy castle hire firms in British Inflatable Hirers Alliance (biha.org.uk)

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