

# Bouncy Castles



The appeal of any fete, fair or other event can be boosted by hiring inflatable play equipment. Such equipment can come in a range of sizes and shapes for use by adults, children or both. It can include bouncy castles, slides, bungee runs and other styles.

However, their quality, construction and maintenance can be variable, raising possible safety concerns. Also, ensuring they are used properly is an important consideration, as accidents resulting in broken limbs, neck and back injuries or worse are not unheard of. On occasion, the entire inflatable has been known to blow away with people inside it.

## Legal requirements

If you are an employer hosting an event where you intend to hire inflatable play equipment, you must comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. Other, more specific health and safety regulations may also be relevant depending upon the nature of the event you intend to hold.

Generally, you will need to ensure that the event is properly managed so that people remain safe. You may need to:

- Complete risk assessments to identify the precautions you need to take
- Implement those precautions, providing information and training for any employees and volunteers on what they need to do
- Document your arrangements and responsibilities for hosting events, perhaps as part of your health and safety policy
- Keep records of what you have done.

## Risk advice line

Should you have any additional questions on this topic or other risk-related matters, as a valued Ecclesiastical customer you can contact us through our Risk Advice Line on

**0345 600 7531**

(Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, excluding bank holidays)

and one of our in-house risk professionals will be able to assist.

Alternatively, you can email us at

**[risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com](mailto:risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com)**

and one of our experts will call you back within 24 hours.

Even if you are not an employer, you may still have to comply with certain aspects of the Act or with other related law, for example, if you manage non-domestic premises. Here, you may need to make sure that premises and equipment are safe during any event where inflatable play equipment is to be used. Beyond this, you also need to meet your common-law duty of care, ensuring that any event does not cause injury to another because you have acted negligently.

## Making a start

When hiring/using inflatable play equipment:

- Hire the equipment from a reputable company, with adequate Public Liability insurance (at least £2m).
- Where possible, arrange for the company to set up the equipment for you. If you set up the equipment yourself, make sure this is done in accordance with the operating manual – paying particular attention to its siting and anchorage.
- Have the company supervise its use for you, otherwise make sure you are given comprehensive instructions on how to do this properly (including any checks that need to be made).
- Check that the inflatable has been manufactured to the current British Standard (BS EN 14960). If it has, there will be a label on it saying so. This will tell you when it was made, how many people can use it at any one time, and any height or weight restriction for the user/s. Make sure these instructions are followed.
- If the inflatable is over one year old, ask for proof that the inflatable has been tested by a competent person (usually by those registered with Inflatable Play Inspection (PIPA) or Amusement Devices Inspection Procedures Scheme (ADIPS)).
- If an electrical blower is provided, check to see that this has been inspected and tested at regular intervals.
- When inflated, make sure that its use is constantly supervised by an adequate number of competent attendants and is safe, following any operating instructions that have been provided.
- Make sure that the inflatable will not be used if the weather is likely to be inclement (i.e. windy or raining).
- During operation, make sure that the inflatable is regularly checked and that arrangements are in place to rectify any defect found, or to ensure its safety until this can be done.

Operating instructions should be supplied with the equipment highlighting the need to (as a minimum):

- Restrict the number of users on the inflatable at the same time, to the limit in the manual or on the unit label.
- Keep within the user height limit given in the manual or on the unit label, making sure bigger users are separated from smaller ones.
- Ensure users can get on and off safely and that there is safety matting at the entrance in case of falls or ejections. These mats should be no more than 2" in depth.
- Prohibit users from wearing shoes, ask them to take off their glasses, if they can, and empty their pockets of all sharp or dangerous items.
- Prohibit users from eating or drinking whilst on the equipment. Anyone who is intoxicated should not be allowed onto the equipment either.
- Supervise use so that things don't get too rough and users refrain from climbing or hanging onto the walls and attempting somersaults.

## Want to know more?

Other useful health and safety information is available on our **website**.

More detailed guidance on using inflatable play equipment is available from the Health and Safety Executive at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) and from RoSPA at: [www.rospa.com/](http://www.rospa.com/).

Note: if you are in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man, then regional variations might apply. In this instance, you should check the guidance provided by the Enforcing Agency for your region. This will be freely available on their website.

## Need to report an incident involving an injury?

If an incident occurs that may result in a claim for injury, please retain any accident investigation records, e.g. accident book entry, photos etc. and contact our specialist claims team on **0345 603 8381** (Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm) for advice. Where you have received correspondence about a claim being made against you, it is important that you notify us immediately and email a copy to our experts on [casualtyclaims@ecclesiastical.com](mailto:casualtyclaims@ecclesiastical.com).

This guidance is provided for information purposes and is general and educational in nature. It should not be used as a substitute for taking professional advice on specific issues and should not be taken as providing legal advice on any of the topics addressed.



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