

# RISK SIMPLIFIED

## RESOURCES

[U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission – Inflatable Amusement Devices Bulletin](#)

## QUESTIONS

[Email PRISM Risk Control](#)  
or call 916.850.7300

## Inflatable Devices – Set-Up & Operation

Updated by Scarlett Sadler

Inflatable devices are available in many shapes and sizes, including bounce houses, slides, and interactive games. It is estimated that an average of 16,000 inflatable related injuries are treated by emergency departments every year. The top causes of these injuries are improper operation, supervision, and set-up. The guidance below will help keep students safe while operating inflatables at your school district.

### Set-Up:

- Vendors should be responsible for setting up inflatables in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Inflatables should always be positioned on a flat, even surface away from tree branches, power lines, and fences.
- If an inflatable will be used on grass:
  - Shut off the irrigation sprinklers the day before to reduce slip hazards and minimize turf damage. Be aware grass underneath an inflatable may begin to decay if set up for an extended period of time.
  - Identify the location of irrigation sprinklers so that anchors do not damage sprinkler heads or piping.

# RISK SIMPLIFIED

- Every anchor point should be utilized each time the inflatable is set up, and follow the anchoring methods recommended by the manufacturer.
- Barricade the area around the inflatable to prevent users from tripping over the anchors.
- Inspect the inflatable and all anchor points before each daily use; and re-secure the product, as appropriate, or as indicated by the manufacturer's instructions.
- Check to ensure that the inflatable is properly inflated before each daily use. Sagging walls, pillars, or wrinkling could indicate the inflatable has not been inflated properly.
- To prevent slip and fall injuries, keep the area around the inflatable clean and clear of objects. Ensure the inflatable's blower has a built-in ground fault circuit interrupter ("GFCI"), which is usually located on the plug.
- If using a generator, ensure the generator has adequate wattage and amps to accommodate the inflatable's blower. Also ensure the generator tank is full of fuel.
- If extensions cords are used, ensure adequate gauge size and length, also eliminate potential trip hazards by using cord keepers or barriers.



## Operation:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for operation. Each inflatable is different, and some may require two operators (i.e., slides).
- Only students who have submitted waivers with guardian consent should be allowed to use inflatables.
- Inflatables should only be used by students, not by employees, volunteers or other adults.
- At any given time, all students in or on an inflatable should be similar in size (e.g., Do not mix kindergarten students with 6th grade students).
- Active adult supervision of students is necessary at all times.
- Immediately stop using the inflatable if there are any signs of air loss (sagging walls, floors, etc.).
- Do not use inflatables in inclement weather.
- Exercise caution when moderate breeze conditions or wind gusts unexpectedly exceed 15 mph. Some indicators of a moderate breeze include small tree branches moving as well as dust or loose paper rising. These conditions may warrant evacuating students and discontinuing use of an inflatable (Review manufacturer's instructions for use during windy conditions).
- Instruct students on the proper use of inflatables. Tumbling, wrestling and flipping should not be allowed.
- Do not allow students to consume food, drink, or chew gum in or on an inflatable.

# RISK SIMPLIFIED

- Shoes and glasses should be removed before playing in or on an inflatable. Additionally, ensure there are no sharp objects in the students' pockets, on their clothing, or in their hair because these items may puncture the inflatable or injure others.
- Toys and other objects should not be allowed in or on an inflatable unless provided by the manufacturer.
- Do not exceed the manufacturer's requirements for maximum loads and occupancy limits.



For questions or additional information regarding inflatable devices, please contact the [PRISM Risk Control Department](#).