



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

If using a bouncy castle or other inflatable, do you know how to manage the health and safety risks?

Are you aware of your legal duties in this regard?

Do you know where to get more information and help?

Bouncy castles and other inflatables can be fun, but there are real risks that need to be managed – especially in the Orkney weather!

There have been several serious incidents across the country where inflatable amusement devices have collapsed or blown away during windy conditions, sadly leading to deaths or serious injuries – often to children.

There are simple precautions can help you avoid serious incidents, whether you supply or buy bouncy castles and inflatables, are hiring one for an event, or operate them.

All local authorities throughout the country have therefore been asked to raise awareness of the general risks associated with operating these devices.

What the law says

If you are using or hiring an inflatable as part of a work activity then health and safety law is likely to apply, just as it does to managing other risks from work.

Therefore, you need to undertake a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. If you employ 5 or more people, your risk assessment needs to be written down. In all cases you need to share the findings of your risk assessment with any employees so they know what controls are put in place to manage the risks.

The main pieces of legislation are the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. 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.

If you're self-employed, you can check on the HSE website if health and safety law applies to you.

Where to get further information

There is a wealth of advice on the Health and Safety Executive website at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/fairgrounds/bouncy-castles-other-inflatables.htm>

Critical steps to help manage risks

Learning from accidents has shown straightforward, obvious but critical steps that need to be taken by people operating inflatables.

Key safety expectations include ensuring that:

- Devices are correctly anchored to the ground using the methods and number of anchor points specified by the manufacturer.
- Wind conditions are measured regularly using suitable equipment, and that operators follow wind-speed limits set out in relevant standards.
- Written documentation is available from a competent inspection body confirming that the inflatable complies with British Standard BS EN 14960.
- The inflatable is subject to a thorough annual inspection by a competent person.

More detailed information, including regarding inspection, anchors and wind speeds is on the HSE website:

Bouncy castle safety advice

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/bouncy-castles-safety-advice.htm>

More detailed safety advice for hirers and operators

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/fairgrounds/inflatables.htm>

Safe supply, inspection and operation of inflatables

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/fairgrounds/inflatables/operators-responsibilities.htm>

Safety warning regarding defective imported blower fans

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/safetybulletins/inflatable-blower-fans.htm>

There is also useful information on the PIPA website

Professional Inflatable Play Association (PIPA)

<https://www.pipa.org.uk/>

For more information

HSE website <https://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm>

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