

Inflatable Safety Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Inflatable slides, games, bounce houses, moonwalks, and climbing walls are used frequently by student organizations as part of mixers, fund raisers, carnivals and other special events. While inflatables appear fun and safe, safety precautions must be put in place to ensure participants can enjoy the games without incident or injury. The US Consumer Product Safety Commission reported that an estimated 31,000 injuries requiring treatment at an emergency room occurred on inflatables in the United States between 2003 and 2007. It is the goal of the University to assist student organizations in taking the necessary precautions needed to have as safe an event as possible.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

The following is a list of basic requirements that must be met when renting inflatable games for use at events to be held on University Property:

1. The event must be scheduled using Student Activity and University Department guidelines.
2. Insurance certificates from the vendors must be submitted to Risk Management. Contact Risk Management at 940.565.2109 for further information.
3. An inspection must be scheduled with the Risk Management Department
4. The vendor MUST contact Texas811 to request a line locate IF the vendor plans on using stakes greater than 16" in length. The call to Texas811 must be made at least 72 hours prior to the event. **This is a state law and must be complied with.**
 - a. Phone: 811 or 1-800-545-6005
 - b. Website: www.texas811.org

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

1. **Vendor Selection:** Rent only from experienced and reputable operators who carry insurance sufficient to meet University requirements and who are licensed by the State of Texas Department of Insurance (for more information go to the Texas Department of Insurance website: <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/commercial/lcamuseinfo.html#ride>
 - a. The TX Department of Insurance posts a list of vendors that are in compliance along with the compliance sticker number/expiration date of each ride inspected. This can be found at: <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/commercial/documents/lcamcurrentsticker.pdf>
2. **Equipment Selection:** Rent equipment suitable for the ages of the participants. Some inflatable equipment is designed for children while other inflatable equipment is designed for adults.
 - a. CAUTION: Be aware that some games are more dangerous than others. More injuries seem to occur on tall slides with steep inclines and on water games compared with "closed" games that are covered and have sides, such as moonwalks.

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3. **Site selection:** The area selected for the site should be flat, open and clear of debris. There should not be overhead or underground obstructions (be sure the vendor has contacted Texas811). If the inflatable has open sides, ensure there is ample room around the inflatable should a participant fall out.
4. **Trip Hazards:** In order to minimize trip hazards associated with inflatable equipment, cords should be covered by a yellow jacket (or similar) and stakes covered by tennis balls (or otherwise marked and covered).
5. **Supervision:** Constant and reliable supervision of the inflatable games is paramount in maintaining a safe event. Supervision of the inflatable games is the sole responsibility of the organization holding the event. The people supervising the inflatable games must understand the safety rules for the games and must be willing to enforce the rules as necessary. It is specifically important to enforce no horseplay and no overcrowding.
 - a. A minimum of 2 supervisors/operators should be assigned at all times to large (greater than 15' high slides or zip lines). Other games should have a minimum of one supervisor/operator.
6. **Inclement Weather:** Have a plan in place to monitor the weather and to react should inclement weather occur. Generally speaking, in case of a thunderstorm or if winds should exceed 20-25 mph the blowers should be disconnected and the inflatables allowed to deflate. Check with the vendor supplying the inflatable or the manufacturer for the specific maximum allowable wind for the inflatable being used (this information is also often on a warning label on the inflatable).
7. **Safety Rules:** Prior to the event, the event planner should discuss with the vendor of the inflatable what specific safety rules apply to the inflatables being used for the event. In addition, inflatables come with labels that give safety instructions for the equipment. This information should be reviewed with the inflatable supervisors/operators and enforced during the event. Additionally, the following are general rules that should be followed:
 - a. No horseplay, flips or wrestling. Use the inflatable for the purpose for which it was designed.
 - b. Shoes, necklaces, eyeglasses and any other sharp objects should be removed prior to entering the inflatable.
 - c. Inflatables using water (water slides for example): Water and electricity mix very poorly together. Ensure your vendor keeps the power supply to the blower far enough from the water supply so that the power cords, junction boxes, blowers, and any other electrical components does not come in contact with the water from the games.
 - d. "Jousting" inflatables: Participants in "jousting" matches must wear head gear (typically supplied by the vendor). The planners of the event should also have a plan for the jousting matches that include rules of engagement, how long is a round, how many rounds in a match, what constitutes a win, etc.
8. **Should an accident occur** the first priority is to get prompt medical care for the injured person. If medical assistance is needed, call 911.
 - a. **Incident Reporting:** All incidents must be reported to the University using the online [Incident Report form](#). The form can be found on the Risk Management website.