

INFLATABLE AMUSEMENTS

Before including inflatable amusements, such as bounce houses, slides, moonwalks, etc., as attractions at the fair and other events, be aware of their risks and take steps to help reduce the chance of injury.

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SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INFLATABLES

Most incidents related to inflatable amusements occur as a result of sudden deflation; improper set-up, including insufficient anchoring; high winds and inadequate supervision and training. To help ensure safe operation of inflatables, the following best practices should be implemented:

- Whenever possible, have the vendor set up the inflatable.
- Locate the inflatable with consideration for a fall zone. Hard surfaces, such as concrete and asphalt, can increase the risk of injury in the event of a fall.
- Set up the inflatable in an area free of hazards. Ensure that there are no overhead wires, nearby roads or other hazards.
- Have an emergency plan in place, and first-aid kits and staff nearby who are trained on emergency response procedures.
- Ensure adequate supervision. Use operators provided by the inflatable rental company if possible. If not, ensure that staff or volunteers supervising the amusement understand the manufacturer's recommendations and are trained by a competent person from the rental company. This training should be documented.
- Follow all of the manufacturer's instructions and safety procedures.
- Ensure the inflatable is well anchored. Suspend its use if strong winds are present. Consult manufacturer's specifications for wind speed limitations.
- Ensure inflatable is free of tears and defects, and that the blower is in good working condition.
- If blower is plugged into an outdoor electrical receptacle, ensure that it is protected with ground fault circuit interruption and that cords are covered to reduce tripping hazards. If blower is run by a generator, the same precautions should be followed, as well as ensuring that carbon monoxide fumes cannot build up inside or around the inflatable and safety protocols are in place when handling fuel.

RISK MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Although liability arising from the use of most inflatables is covered by MCIT, the best practice is to have them covered by the vendor who provides them. This is especially true where the vendor does the set up and manages the operation. *See Chapter 11, Vendors and Exhibitors for details about appropriate agreements, coverage, limits and certificates of insurance.*

If the inflatable is more of a mechanical amusement (e.g., a mechanical bull) and the agricultural society has retained responsibility for its operation, liability coverage is excluded by MCIT and coverage would have to be placed with an alternate carrier. *See Chapter 10, Special Events for details about the exclusion and options for obtaining appropriate coverage.*

All inflatable amusements that use electrical power are subject to an annual inspection before operation. More information about these inspections are provided on the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry website (DLI.mn.gov).