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RISKAlert

June 2014

Inflatable Rides

There have been two incidents of children sustaining injuries as a result of bounce equipment accidents in the past month. Both involved equipment that was swept up by high wind while being used. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has opened an investigation into these two incidents. A safety warning or other guidance may be forthcoming.



The following safety guidelines will help to ensure a safe "Fun Day"

The most important safety factor when dealing with inflatables is the wind. Check with the rental firm providing the device for the maximum safe wind speed for safe operation of the inflatable device. Most manufacturers have a maximum rating of 15 miles per hour (MPH). Bounce equipment should come with a label containing safety information about set-up and assembly. Wind speeds above this rating require use of the device to be discontinued. As a point of reference - when tree tops begin to sway - wind speeds are around 15 mph. On humid days, thunderstorms with wind gusts can "pop up" quickly - be alert for changing weather conditions and respond appropriately.

Other safety tips include:

- Select a reputable and properly insured rental firm. The rental firm should provide a certificate of insurance and endorsing the institution in accordance with your Risk Transfer Program. We recommend liability limits of at least \$1,000,000 each occurrence and \$2,000,000 in the aggregate. Your institution must be an additional insured. **DO NOT SIGN A CONTRACT PRESENTED BY THE RENTAL COMPANY WITHOUT FIRST CONSULTING WITH YOUR ATTORNEY.**



- The rental firm should review safe operating rules with someone during delivery and set up. They will generally require someone to sign off on the receipt of these rules. If something is not clear - **ASK QUESTIONS!** The rental firm will communicate a maximum number of individuals who can use the device at one time. Ask about emergency procedures also.
- Safety rules typically include prohibitions against food, drinks, gum and pets on the equipment. Remove shoes, eyeglasses, hairclips, jewelry and other sharp objects. No climbing on sides; no diving or summersaults. **DO NOT ALLOW A DEVICE TO BE OVERCROWDED!**
- The rental firm supplying the inflatable must do the set up. They must secure the inflatable according to the manufacturer's recommendations for the individual equipment. Inspect the inflatable and tie downs before and several times during use. If the inflatable tie downs become loose, the rental firm must be contacted immediately and use discontinued.
- Be consistent in terms of age and size for groups entering Bounce House. This helps to minimize miss-matches and reduce the potential for injury.
- There must be at least one person supervising students in inflatables at all times. Students must follow rules or be removed from the device.
- When inflated, watch for sagging, rips or holes in the material.
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters must be used with outdoor extension cords. Try to locate electrical cords away from walkways to reduce the potential for a trip and fall.
- Have radios or cell phones available to summon assistance should an emergency occur.



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