

Inflatables: Keeping Fun Safe for Everyone



Inflatables have become a popular feature at community gatherings and celebrations offering fun, active entertainment for participants of all ages. While these experiences are designed to provide enjoyment and are considered generally safe, it's important to remember that inflatables do carry inherent risks.

With proper setup, secure anchoring, adequate supervision, and attention to weather conditions, many accidents and injuries can be prevented.

The following risk management guidelines outline best practices for the rental, safe set-up, and operation of these structures.

Advanced Planning

When renting an inflatable, a license or permit may be required depending on the design features or the nature of the location where the inflatable will be used. The Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan (TSASK) should be contacted to determine what is required by way of permits before an event takes place.

It is important to work with professional vendors only. The vendor should provide:

- a valid permit; and
- an up-to-date operating license ([TSASK Licence Application](#)).

They should also provide a current Certificate of Insurance which outlines:

- adequate commercial general liability limits (\$1 million or higher);
- products and completed operations coverage; and
- the municipality named as an additional insured.

Contracts

Execute a written contract with the vendor that outlines:

- compliance with manufacturer guidelines and regulations;
- delivery, set-up, anchoring, and removal of the structure;
- indemnification/hold harmless language in favour of the municipality; and
- allocation of responsibility for weather monitoring and for shutting down or deflating units if conditions become unsafe.

Safe Set-up

- Have the inflatable set up on firm, level ground free of hazards and away from buildings, trees, fences, and overhead powerlines.
- The inflatable should be free of rips and tears and must be fully inflated during use.
- The site should have adequate space for anchorage and the inflatable be properly anchored and secured to the tether points in accordance with manufacturer guidelines.
- Ensure the generator is CSA approved and that the wires are properly secured.
- Ensure the anchoring system and equipment are positioned to prevent tripping hazards.
- Clear the ground of large stones or sharp objects that could cause injury to the inflatable or user.
- Set up clear entrance and exit areas as well as waiting areas and use safety mats at the entrance and exit points.

Safe Operation

Proper supervision is just as important as proper assembly and is needed to make sure that all users are playing safely and obeying the rules of the inflatable.

If the vendor is unable to supply trained staff for the event, it is important that:

- written instructions are received on how to safely operate the inflatable;
- staff and volunteers receive operating instructions and training on how to operate the inflatable;
- first-aid kits are accessible to supervisors; and
- operators are familiar with what users are not permitted to do while on the inflatable.

We also recommend that you:

- Appoint at least one adult to supervise children at all times while they are on the inflatable. Ensure manufacturer recommendations are reviewed as the number of supervisors needed may be based on the device height, type, and occupancy.
- Enforce manufacturer recommended age, weight, and height requirements along with occupancy limits.
- Post safety rules in clearly visible areas.
- Prohibit rough play and risky behaviors.
- Remove occupants immediately if the inflatable deflates.
- A person trained in CPR/First Aid should be in attendance at the event.
- Establish a response plan for what to do in case of emergency.
- Require users to sign a waiver confirming their understanding of the rules and the risks associated with inflatable use.

Watch the Weather

Inflatables should not be used in rainstorms or high winds. Rain can make the surface slick and the mud created can affect anchoring. Strong winds can lift or tip over the inflatable, and in some cases, the wind has torn inflatables from their anchors, lifting them in the air with children inside. Stop using an inflatable immediately in the event of rain or winds that exceed 24 km/hr.



If you have questions or need help with this or other risk-mitigation strategies, please contact your SUMAssure representative.

