

Safety Tips For Hirers

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How to hire and use a bouncy castle safely at home

Hiring a bouncy castle for a private event at home can be brilliant fun for parties and events. Unfortunately, our research shows that 9 per cent of all UK adults have seen an accident or injury on a bouncy castle. Many of these accidents could be avoided if the hirer asked three key questions at the point of booking and followed the right guidance and safety advice while the equipment is in use at their home.

The Register of Play Inspectors International RPII – an international body for training inflatable inspectors and operators and the play inflatables inspection scheme PIPA have launched a new campaign in 2021 called **#BounceSafe**, designed to help parents and others hiring and using bouncy castles at home to have as safe an experience as possible.

This leaflet contains useful information for the hirer to help keep users safe and to have a fun and enjoyable event.





28%

of Parents

Have hired a bouncy castle

Why is it important?

33%

Don't know what questions to ask when they book a castle

New research from the RPII and PIPA in 2021, shows that 33% of UK adults do not know what questions to ask regarding safety at the point of booking an inflatable.

Furthermore 73% of all UK adults do not know that when the inflatable operator leaves the event, if they have hired the bouncy castle then they fully responsible for children using the bouncy castle, fully liable for accidents and must supervise the bouncy castle at all times.



24%

Saw a bouncy castle completely unsupervised while in use

73%

Don't know they are responsible for users when the operator leaves



26%

of UK adults

Saw too many children on the bouncy castle at once.



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Booking an inflatable

We advise that you book your inflatable with a reputable company.

We advise that you book your inflatable with a reputable company. Check their reviews, speak to others who have booked an inflatable, check if the company is a member of any association to do with hiring inflatables. Before booking you should ask the three questions detailed below and receive satisfactory answers.

1

Does the inflatable have a valid, in-date test certificate and does it have a PIPA tag?

2

Do you have valid insurance?

3

Have they been trained by the RPII?

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Booking an inflatable

1

Does the inflatable have a valid, in-date test certificate and does it have a PIPA tag?

Just like outdoor playgrounds and indoor soft-play centres, play inflatables should be tested and inspected each year.

Make sure the inflatable you are hiring has a PIPA tag prominently displayed. PIPA tag picture attached. Alternatively, the inflatable might have a "Declaration of Operational Compliance". These are issued by another organization, "The Amusement Device Inspection Procedures Scheme" (ADIPS), after thorough inspection of the equipment. The PIPA tag has a number on it which can be fed into the PIPA website (pipa.org.uk) to check when the inflatable was last inspected. It only takes a few minutes to check.

The inspection will have been carried out by a qualified person who has been examined and registered as competent by the RPII. Do not hire an inflatable unless it has been inspected during the previous twelve months and passed the stringent test. It must have a valid and in-date PIPA report or ADIPS DOC.



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Booking an inflatable



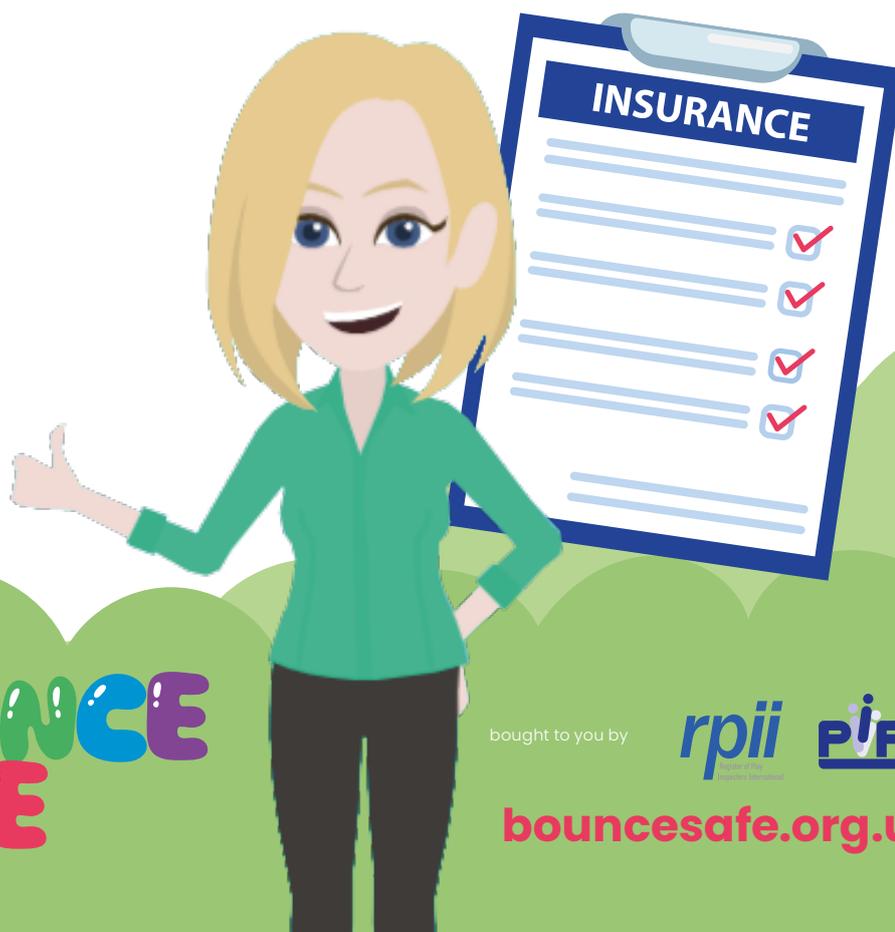
2

Do you have valid insurance?

Every inflatable operator must have suitable and sufficient insurance cover in place, including Public Liability Insurance with a minimum cover level of £5 million.

They should be happy to show their certificate to the hirer at the point of booking or at the event itself. We recommend that the operator has a minimum cover level of £5 million.

As a hirer, you are not required by law to take out your own insurance but you may wish to take out Personal Liability insurance in the event that you are held liable if someone sustains an injury. This may already be part of your home insurance policy, so it is always good to check your documents.



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Booking an inflatable

3

Have they been trained by the RPII?

The RPII facilitates training courses for operators in the UK on the correct management and operation of inflatable play equipment.

The training covers key issues such as the positioning of the bouncy castle, wind speed, anchorage of the inflatable, use and positioning of landing mats and much more. This training meets industry recognized standards to ensure that operators are competent to manage the safe use of inflatables.

The RPII is launching new, updated training as part of the [#BounceSafe](#) campaign.

Has the equipment been cleaned and disinfected?

We suggest that you ask for details on cleaning schedules and if the inflatable will have been used at another venue before coming to yours. The inflatable must have been cleaned and disinfected thoroughly prior to being used again.

If you are happy that the operator has answered the questions satisfactorily, then proceed with the booking.



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Hiring an inflatable

What to do on the day

As the hirer, you are responsible for the safety of your guests on the inflatable after the operator leaves. Before the inflatable is used, ask yourself the following questions so as to ensure your guests have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Is the weather suitable for safe use of the inflatable?

It is very important that the inflatable is not set up in too windy or too wet weather as it could blow away or cause people to slip. The wind speed must be no more than Force 5 on the Beaufort scale (24 mph or 38 km/h) which is when small trees in leaf begin to sway. The operator should have checked the weather forecast and measured the wind speed with an anemometer (wind speed indicator) before setting up the inflatable but you should monitor for an increase in wind speed during your event. If it is very hot, the inflatable should be set up in shade, if possible.

Has the equipment been set up properly?

The inflatable must be set up on reasonably flat ground and must be anchored down correctly using all of the anchor-points provided. Each play inflatable has a minimum of 6 anchor-points but, no matter how many there are, they must all be used. If setting up on grass or other soft surface, the operator must use metal stakes of 16mm diameter and 380mm length. If on a hard surface where stakes cannot be used, a weight of 163 kgs must be attached to each anchor-point. Periodically, during the event, check that all of the anchorages are still secure.

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Are there enough safety mats?

There should be safety mats on the ground across every entrance or break in the walls of the inflatable if it is sited on a hard surface although this might not be necessary on soft ground. The mats should be no more than 50mm thick and should cover the whole of the ground where there is an opening in the walls of the inflatable to a distance of 1.2m.

How many users can there be at one time?

The number of users allowed can be found written or printed on the inflatable and in the instruction leaflet if you have been given one. Make sure that this number is not exceeded at any time. Having fewer users is better for Covid-19 social distancing.

Have I made provision for supervision at all times?

Once the operator leaves your house or event, you are responsible and liable for the safety of all of the users. The users must be closely supervised at all times they are on the inflatable.

The RPII and PIPA #BounceSafe campaign research showed that 73% of those hiring an inflatable for home use were not aware of this requirement for constant supervision. It is very important for the safety of the users that a responsible adult (16 Years of age or over and able to exercise some authority over the users) supervises the use of the inflatable all of the time it is in use.

Did the operator do a final check of the equipment and explain everything to you?

It is important for the safety of the users that you take note of these final instructions which should have included what to do in the event of something going wrong. It could be that anchorages will work loose, the inflatable might move, the wind might strengthen, internal pressure might reduce. Keep the telephone number of the operator handy so that you can get help quickly and be ready to summon an ambulance in case of serious injury to anyone.

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Have I instructed the Supervisor(s) sufficiently?



Be sure that everyone who is likely to be called on to be Supervisor during the day has received instruction. Lack of adequate supervision causes many of the accidents on inflatables. Furnish each Supervisor with a whistle with which to attract the attention of the users.

In particular:

- a) Check that the number of users allowed on at one time does not exceed the number on the inflatable. Better to allow fewer than to allow more.
- b) Separate larger users from smaller ones.
- c) Before allowing anyone on, it is essential that the supervisor talks to the users about keeping each other safe. Include instructions such as NO SOMERSAULTS, NO ROUGH PLAY, NO CLIMBING ON THE WALLS and that OLDER USERS LOOK AFTER YOUNGER ONES.
- d) Check that users have removed shoes, jewellery such as necklaces, anything hard or sharp in their pockets or on their clothes.
- e) Check they have no food or drink with them.
- f) Keep users away from the step. The step is for mounting and alighting.
- g) Keep onlookers off of the safety mats. Make them stand back.
- h) Keep other attractions away from the inflatable e.g. Barbecue, food table etc.
- i) Use the whistle and shout "STOP" to attract the attention of the users in the event of an incident of misbehaviour or an accident on the inflatable.



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Have I taken all necessary COVID-19 precautions?

Guests must declare any COVID-19 symptoms.

Users must wash their hands before getting onto the inflatable.

Think about restricting the number of users on the inflatable at one time. Ensure guests observe social distancing practices as much as possible.

If anyone develops COVID-19 symptoms during the event, stop the use of the inflatable.



For more information about the #BounceSafe campaign or the safe use of inflatables in general, visit:

bouncesafe.org.uk

Or visit



www.playinspectors.com



www.pipa.org.uk

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