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**GUIDANCE NOTES: INFLATABLES.**

1. Introduction.

Guidance for safe standard operation procedures. Further guidance can be sought by contacting the operator.

1. This Guidance document sets out the operating procedures that should be followed to ensure the safe set up and use Chris’s Castles or Bounce Buddies Wakefield owned bouncy castles/inflatables/play equipment. It incorporates advice and information provided in The Safe Use and Operation of Bouncy Castles guidance published by The Institute of Sport and Recreation Management and guidance produced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Scope This guidance document covers all bouncy castles owned by Chris’s Castles/Bounce Buddies Wakefield from May 2019 – May 2020, being used at events or available for private hire. If further bouncy castles or add-ons to the existing bouncy castles are purchased, then this document should be reviewed for continued relevance as should the associated risk assessment.

Basic Operating Procedures.

* 1. Manual Handling. Risk assessment has been completed to identify the measures that staff need to adhere to, to ensure the safe transportation, loading, unloading, setting up, dismantling, packing or moving the bouncy castles. It is vital that there is the right number of staff to help carry out loading, unloading, setting up/assembly and dismantling, without individuals hurting themselves. If there is not an adequate number of staff available, as identified in the manual handling risk assessment, then the bouncy castle must not be used.
  2. Siting the Inflatable. The inflatable must always be sited on a flat level surface, with the sides and rear at least 1m away from any walls, vehicles etc. The front of the inflatable should have at least 3ft of clear area, so that onlookers do not crowd around the entrance and reduce visibility for the attendant.

If the ground surface is abrasive (such as tarmac or concrete), or oily or dirty, a ground sheet must be laid down first to prevent discolouration, scuffing, tearing or wearing out of the base material. Under no circumstances should any part of the inflatable be sited near or under overhead cables or electricity transmission lines, branches, low beams or other overhanging structures that might come into contact with either the unit itself or any user.

2.3 Assembly and Set up Procedures.

The bouncy castles must not be unrolled or inflated whilst in a very cold or frozen state. This may occur if they have been subjected to low or freezing temperatures during storage or transportation. To prevent the fabric cracking, it should be allowed to warm up gradually prior to use.

At least 2 members of staff are required for the safe assembly of the bouncy castles. The outcomes of the manual handling assessment must be followed at all times.

If using outside check the wind speed using an anemometer. (not supplied) If the wind speed reaches 16mph or above, the inflatable must not be used.

The inflatable must not be used in the rain.

If members of public are present during the set-up, the area must be cordoned off to prevent access to the equipment.

Ensure that the ground or floor is even and free from protrusions. If using outside, a ground sheet must be used.

Ensure that there is 1m clearance between the bouncy castles and any wall. There should also be a 3m clearance to the front of the unit.

On no account may the units be inflated with people standing on or inside the bouncy castle, as the unit can suddenly move without warning until fully inflated and particularly before anchoring.

If an extension cable is used the core wire should not be less than 1.5mm diameter.

A generator must not be used, without prior permission from the designated responsible adult., as an incorrect generator can cause damage to the blower and inflatable.

The public must be prevented at all times from having access to the fans, electricity supply cables and outlets, safety equipment, anchor ropes and stakes or sandbags at all times whilst the inflatable is in use.

Where high numbers of people are expected, barriers must be used, together with suitable signage to warn and exclude the public from the working area and the safe working zone.

Ensure that the fan is located over 1.5m away from the bouncy castle and is not in contact with the fabric of the inflatable at any time. This area must be cordoned to prevent people coming into contact with it.

When ready to inflate, the blower should be attached to the small inflation tube at the rear of the unit. The tube must be fully extended and firmly attached to the fan. The fastening strap must be used to tie the inflatable tube to the fan.

Ensure that the intake grill to the blower is not obstructed before the power is switched on. Ensure that cables are adequately cordoned to prevent trip hazards.

The unit should inflate in 2 mins. If after this time it has not fully inflated, firstly check the deflation zips are closed, secondly ensure that there is no damage to the unit and thirdly check that the inlet to the blower is not obstructed. If full inflation cannot be achieved the unit must not be used.

If erected outdoors, it is vital that anchor stakes are used at all anchorage points at all times. If the ground is not suitable for this form of anchoring, the bouncy castles must not be used.

At least 1 metal stake should be used at each anchor point and should be hammered fully into the ground ensuring that the angle between the attachment rope and the stake is as near 90 degrees as possible. You must ensure that there are no underground services in the area you intend to anchor the unit in.

Checks may be made with landowners of the site, prior to erection, and written confirmation of the location of underground services may have to be obtained. A locating device should be used to ensure the absence of underground services, prior to using the stakes outside in the event services are likely to be in the vicinity of the inflatable.

Sandbags must not be used for anchoring outside.

If using indoors, the bouncy castle must be adequately secured to prevent movement.

A minimum of four sandbags must be used.

Non inflatable gym mats or equivalent soft-landing material of minimum 3cm to maximum 12cm thickness must be used to cover any hard surfaces adjacent to all open sides and entrances /exits.

2.4 Crowd Control at Events.

Where the inflatable is the only attraction and where large crowds are expected, then a perimeter fence for crowd control should be provided. In these circumstances the crowd control barrier should surround the device. The barriers should be erected at the rear and sides of the unit at least 1.8m away and at least 3.5m away from the front. These dimensions should be regarded as minimum dimensions. The barrier should be at least 1m high and capable of withstanding people leaning on it or being pushed against it.

At events where crowds can be expected but the public does not have access to the sides or rear of the inflatable, then a limited crowd control barrier may be provided in place of a full perimeter fence. In all cases the operating area in the front of the step/front apron must be kept clear of onlookers so that the operator or attendant has a clear field of vision and can ensure that the children mount and alight the inflatable safely. Non inflatable gym mats or equivalent soft-landing material of minimum 3cm to maximum 12cm thickness should be provided to cover any hard surfaces adjacent to all open sides and entrances /exits.

2.5 Staffing.

The number of staff controlling access and egress and ensuring the safe use of the equipment will vary depending on how many people are at the event. An assessment should be made prior to the event of expected numbers. High numbers will require more staffing to ensure control is maintained. It is particularly important that a responsible person, capable of exercising some authority over users supervises the use of the equipment at all times.

The use of a whistle or a audible device is recommended for all supervises.

UNDER NO circumstances must the equipment ever be left unattended. If staff are required elsewhere the bouncy castle must be deflated and the area barricaded off.

2.6 Rules and Regulations.

A staff member should be appointed, on each occasion that the bouncy castle is intended to be used, to act as the responsible person. This person will be in charge of controlling access and egress as well as ensuring inappropriate behaviour is stopped. A whistle or similar audible device should be available for this use. The responsible person will also be responsible for organising time slots for different age groups to use the bouncy castle.

The responsible person will ensure that users are admitted to the inflatable in a controlled and safe manner and must: -

1. Ensure that all users remove footwear (except socks), and any other hard, sharp or dangerous objects from their person, such as buckles, pens, purses, heavy watches, loose necklaces, heavy jewellery et. Glasses should also be removed.

2. Not allow anyone to bounce on the step front apron. The step must only be used to assist the users in getting on and off.

3. Not allow anyone to climb or hang on the outside walls.

4. Ensure that attendants watch the activity on the inflatable constantly. They should use a whistle and take action at the first sign of misbehaviour, keeping an eye on the safety and wellbeing of all the users. Rough play must not be allowed.

5. Ensure that no one eats, drinks or chews gum whilst using the bouncy castle.

6. Ensure that the equipment is not overloaded thereby creating a danger to the users. The number of users at any one time is detailed on the front step of each inflatable.

7. Ensure that where different age groups and sizes are present a system to allow separate play time is set up according to age and size.

2.7 Safety Awareness.

Be aware of potential danger that can arise when inflatable equipment is used in ways for which the designer never intended it. On no account should adults use the equipment where its specified for children’s use. The accepted age range for use is 4 – 12yrs unless advised otherwise.

2.8 Final Adjustment and Checks.

When the unit is fully inflated, the unit can be pulled around its anchorage points to adjust its final position. The ropes to the pegs or other means of anchorage should be loosened off before the unit is pulled around, and then readjusted or retied accordingly. Make sure that you have enough helpers to pull the unit round without risk of hurting or straining yourself. The fan must be switched off whilst the unit is being turned. When the unit is in the final position the anchorage points must be pegged or tied down and then rechecked. The inlet pipe must also be rechecked to make sure that it is straight and not twisted and that the fan is still upright. The unit can then be checked as detailed in the section on safety, and finally the fan can be switched on again. No one must be allowed to use the inflatable unit before it has been checked and the operator is satisfied that it is safe for public use. The operator should always check that: -

\*The anchorage points are secured as recommended;

\* There is sufficient air pressure to all parts of the unit (any soft or sagging areas should be investigated further);

\*The unit is free from foreign objects and other visible hazards or damage e.g. tears or split seams which might trap a child’s hand or foot.

2.9 Electrically Powered Fans.

Use of portable electrical equipment involved a potential risk of electric shock, burns or fire. A major cause of accidents is failure to maintain equipment. The risk can be managed effectively if sensible and appropriate rules for use and maintenance are applied. The electric fan supplied for the unit must only be used with the electricity supply specified for that fan. Connecting the fan to a non-specified electricity supply is very dangerous. Each fan is fitted with a motor that operates at mains electricity voltage. Using electrical equipment in wet or damp conditions is dangerous. An should always be used. Before each use the RCD unit should be checked to ensure that it is working using the test button provided. If an extension lead is to be used, then ensure that it can carry 13amps. Cables should not be in a position where people can trip over them. The blower should be inspected every day it is in use to ensure that there are no exposed wires or loose bolts, screws etc. and the mesh guards over the air inlet and outlet are secure and not damaged. Electric cables should be checked to see if they are worn or chafed and that the plugs, sockets and switches are not damaged. Under no circumstances must damaged equipment be used. Report any concerns immediately.

Always store the electrical equipment in a dry place.

3.0 Dismantling

If members of the public are present during the dismantling, the area must be cordoned off. Before deflating the unit, ensure that all debris and litter is removed.

Under no circumstances may the units be deflated with people standing on or inside the bouncy castle, as the unit can suddenly move without warning and particularly after removing the anchors. Turn off the fan and take care that no one comes into contact with the hot parts of the fan. Undo the deflation zips to release the air. Only pack away the fan when cool to avoid any damage to the fabric of the inflatable.

Ensure that as much air as possible has escaped before starting to roll and pack the unit. Roll the unit in the reverse order of unpacking, ensuring the tarpaulin / ground sheet is not rolled with the unit.

Use the ratchet retaining straps to secure the unit. Ensure a minimum of two people lift the unit to upright. Use the sack barrow to move the unit back to storage. Only pack away the unit when it is completely dry.

The Inflatable.

Care must be taken when transporting the inflatable. The controls listed in the Manual Handling assessment must be followed.

Fire Precautions.

Any indoor area where the inflatable is to be sited must comply fully with any regulatory requirements including fire regulations. If the fire alarm sounds during use, all users must be directed to get off the bouncy castle and leave the building by the nearest available exit. Members of the public should congregate at the assembly point according to the fire action notices displayed within the building. Under no circumstances must the bouncy castle block fire exits or fire exit routes.

3.1 Accident Procedures.

If there is any concern over an injury to an adult or child, an ambulance must be called immediately. Where a child is involved the parent or responsible adult who accompanied the child to the event should be contacted immediately.

3.2 Examination, Inspection and Maintenance.

Examination of all inflatables must be inspected by a qualified inspector. Chris’s Castles/Bounce Buddies Wakefield inflatables are annually tested by a competent tester to British Standards. A portable appliance test (PAT) must also be carried out on the blowers once a year. This must be completed by a competent person. It is the responsibility of Chris’s Castles/Bounce Buddies Wakefield to ensure that these tests are carried out annually.

5.2 Daily Inspection.

An inspection must be carried out by the responsible person before the first use on any day. The inspection must be recorded. The inspection must include checking to ensure that:

The unit has been inspected within the last year.

All anchor points are intact and not damaged

Anchor ropes are not worn of chafed

Anchor fixings and their location remain sound for continued use.

There are no holes or rips in the surface or seams of the bed and step/front apron.

When fully inflated all walls are firm and upright and the pressure in the bed and step and front apron is enough to give a reliable and firm footing.

When fully inflated the unit is more than 1 meters away from any walls, with 3 meters at the front.

The blower is in a safe secure area and has no exposed wires or loose bolts screw.

The blower is 1.5 meters away from the unit.

Electric cables are not worn or chafed, do not cause a tripping hazard and cannot be tampered with. That plugs, sockets and switches are not damaged and are not accessible to the public.

The blower/ Inflation tube connection is airtight and secured.

That plugs, sockets and cables are suitably protected and not exposed to water or wet conditions. The inflatable should not be used by the public until any adjustments or repairs, judged to be necessary as a result of the inspection, have been satisfactorily carried out.

3.3 Cleaning.

It is vital that children’s play equipment is cleaned thoroughly at regular intervals and that the highest standards of hygiene are maintained. The PVC surface should be cleaned as necessary (an assessment should be made after every use) with a non-corrosive antibacterial cleaning solution that meets the official standard of BSEN1276:1997 or BS EN 13697:2001. Vacuuming can also be used to remove dust and litter from the recesses, seams and corners of the unit. A Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Assessment (COSHH) should be completed if handling of hazardous substances (identified by an orange label on the back of the product) if required.

