DIOCESE OF AMARILLO

Inflatables Guidelines

And

Safety Checklist
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RISK MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE, “inflatable houses” are very dangerous. Typically, they are rented as opposed to purchased for the main reason, LIABILITY. When they are rented for carnivals or fairs, the vendor will typically extend liability insurance for the parish etc. in the event of an injury to an individual while on the apparatus. Limits are not that high but it does create some insulation to the Diocese, protect your self-insured retention, and holds the appropriate party accountable. Another reason to rent over own is educating personnel on the usage of the system and maintenance.

Rented Inflatables Guidelines

The following read and steps will be necessary to ensure compliance with safety and insurance guidelines.

STATE BAR of TEXAS, texasbar.com - This article, which was originally published on the Merlin Law Group’s blog, has been edited and reprinted with permission.

CLIENT PAGE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW SO YOU WON’T GET BOUNCED.

By Kay K. Morgan

The most important tip to keep in mind when renting an inflatable is to rent from a reputable vendor. A reputable and a “legal” vendor in Texas must: (1) be fully insured and (2) have a current Texas Amusement Ride Compliance Sticker (similar to an automobile safety inspection sticker) from the Texas Department of Insurance, or TDI, for each inflatable that is rented with that device’s vend/serial number on the sticker. The stickers must be obtained annually, and the filing fee is $40 for each sticker. Ask for a copy of the sticker if one is not displayed on the inflatable and make sure it is current for the year. To check for vendor compliance, go to http://www.tdi.texas.gov/commercial/documents/lcamcurrentsticker.pdf. This list is updated weekly and shows the name of the vendor and the inspection expiration date. If a vendor is listed on the TDI website, then that vendor is in compliance with the regulations requiring annual inspections and liability insurance in the amounts specified in Chapter 2151 of the Texas Occupations Code, or TOC, as discussed below.

The TDI regulates amusement rides for safety and liability. It has determined by law that inflatable devices are considered amusement rides. TOC defines an amusement ride as “a mechanical, gravity, or water device or devices that carry or convey passengers along, around, or over a fixed or restricted route or course within a defined area for the purpose of giving its passengers amusement, pleasure, or excitement.” The TDI classifies amusement rides as either a “Class A” ride (“Any amusement ride with a fixed location and designed primarily for use by children 12 years of age or younger”) or a “Class B” ride (“Any amusement ride not defined as a Class A amusement ride”).

By definition, “inflatables” are a Class B ride. Under TOC and the Texas Administrative Code, Class B amusement ride compliance for continuous air flow inflatables requires limits of liability of $1,000,000 bodily injury per occurrence and $500,000 property damage per occurrence.
The inspection for the TDI Texas Amusement Ride Compliance Sticker is performed by an approved inspector of the insurance company issuing the insurance policy. TDI does not inspect rides; rather, the ride’s owner or vendor’s own insurance company inspects the rides. The sticker indicates that the ride has met the standards required by the manufacturer, insurer, and/or the American Society for Testing and Materials. However, recognition by the TDI that the amusement ride has satisfied these standards is not an endorsement by the TDI of a statement regarding the safe operation of the amusement ride.

Five tips when renting an inflatable such as a bounce house, slide, or moonwalk:

1. **Vendors**: Check the TDI website and rent your inflatable only from a reputable vendor who can provide you with a current Amusement Ride Compliance Sticker showing insurance and annual inspection and make sure that the sticker is current and the vend/serial number matches the inflatable vend/serial number that you are renting;
2. **Equipment**: Rent inflatables that are suitable for the age group participants;
3. **Supervision**: Don’t use the inflatable as a babysitter. Constant and reliable supervision is paramount in maintaining a safe event;
4. **Weather**: Have a plan B for inclement weather. Check the warning label on the inflatables for information on high winds and what is or is not sustainable for use of the inflatable you are renting. Using the inflatable in thunderstorms and rain, regardless of size, is generally unacceptable; and
5. **Safety Rules**: Ask the vendor from whom you are renting the inflatable what specific safety rules apply to the particular inflatable you are leasing and review any warning label or manufacturer instructions.

Following these tips may help to make your next “inflatable” party or event safe and successful so that you don’t get bounced.

**STEPS FOR REDUCING POTENTIAL LIABILITY**

- Set up, operation, and tear down of inflatables to be done by the vendor.
- Vendor to carry Commercial General Liability coverage.
- The Diocese of Amarillo is to be named an additional insured on vendor liability insurance.
- The vendor contract must be provided and excludes any language that will place liability on The Diocese of Amarillo for the vendor’s negligence. The contract should go through the contract review process.
- The vendor’s safety guidelines must be reviewed before the event to ensure adequacy.

It’s important to minimize as much risk as possible. Documentation is a great tool in protecting against lawsuits and complaints. Documentation help ensure consent and expectations.

- File the below in a do not remove/delete folder in the church office.
  - Date, location, and name of the organization hosting event.
  - Information on who will be participating in the activity.
  - Evidence of Insurance for the vendor naming The Diocese of Amarillo as an additional insured.
  - Copy of the vendor’s contract.
  - Copy of the vendor’s safety guidelines and restrictions.

Please contact Ivy Taylor, Risk Management, at (806)383-2243 with any questions.
Diocesan Owned Inflatables Guidelines

- Diocesan owned inflatables may be used on **DIOCESAN PROPERTY ONLY** for **DIOCESAN FUNCTIONS ONLY**.
  - Includes Diocesan fundraisers that are opened to the public.
- Do not rent Diocesan owned inflatables.
- Do not loan Diocesan owned inflatables.
- Follow the inflatable manufacture recommendations.
- EVERY EVENT, complete the Inflatable Inspection Checklist for each inflatable to ensure safety and to ensure guidelines are followed.
- Inspect inflatables before, during, and after use.
- Clean and sanitize inflatables after use.

**STEPS FOR REDUCING POTENTIAL LIABILITY**

- Set up, operation, and tear down of inflatables to be done by a trained person.
- Review manufacture recommendations, safety rules, and restrictions before the event to ensure adequacy.
- Inspect inflatable before, during, and after use.
- Clean and sanitize inflatable after use.

It's important to minimize as much risk as possible. Documentation is a great tool in protecting against lawsuits and complaints. Documentation help ensure consent and expectations.

File the below in a do not remove/delete folder in the church office.
- Date, location, and name of the organization hosting event.
- Information on who will be participating in the activity.
- Copy of the safety rules and restrictions.
- Copy of Inflatable Inspection Checklist.
The following steps from the Child Injury Prevention Alliance are necessary to ensure compliance with safety and insurance guidelines.

**How to Properly Set Up a Bounce House/Inflatables**

**INJURY PREVENTION TIPS**

- Limit bouncer use to children 6 years of age and older.
- Only allow a bouncer to be used when an adult trained on safe bouncer use is present.
- The safest way to use a bouncer is to have only one child on it at a time.
- If more than one child will be on the bouncer at the same time, make sure that the children are about the same age and size (weight).

Wind is an inflatable’s worst enemy and can cause it to become very dangerous. Most manufacturers recommend removing children from bounce houses and/or deflating them when winds are 20 to 25 miles per hour or higher. If your “pants are flapping like a flag,” you should direct children to leave the bounce house until the wind dies down.

**PROPER USE**

- Take off shoes, eyeglasses, and jewelry. Remove all sharp objects from your pockets before entering the bouncer.
- No rough play, tumbling, wrestling, or flips. Stay away from the entrance or exit and the sides or walls of the bouncer while you are inside of it.
- If the bouncer begins to lose air, stop play and carefully exit the bouncer.

**SETTING UP AN INFLATABLE BOUNCER**

**Outside set up:**

- Place the bouncer on a flat surface.
- Remove all rocks, sticks, or objects such as sprinkler systems sticking up from the ground before setting up the bouncer.
- Make sure there is open space around all sides of the bouncer.
- Place the bouncer away from tree branches or power lines.
- If the bouncer will be set up on a hard surface, place a soft surface around the entrance/exit to the bouncer.

**Inside set up:**

- Only set up bouncers in rooms where the ceiling is several feet above the top of the bouncer.
- Place the bouncer away from walls.
- If the bouncer will be set up in a room with hard floors, place a soft surface around the entrance/exit to the bouncer.
Safety and Supervision of a Bounce House

The bounce house should be supervised by responsible (and preferably trained) personnel while the bounce house is in use. Do not leave the children unattended.

Operator cannot be under the influence of any drugs or alcohol that would affect their judgment or ability to ensure the children’s safety.

The safest way to use a bouncer is

- to have only one child on it at a time. Since that is not always possible (and is not nearly as fun), the bounce house supervisor should make sure that children bouncing together are approximately the same age and size.
- make sure that the number of children bouncing at any one time does not exceed the maximum occupancy limits of the bouncer. The maximum occupancy limits are usually stitched onto a label on the outside of the bouncer.
- children should be encouraged to bounce away from the walls of the bouncer, and should not be permitted to bounce near the entrance/exit, where they can fall out.
- children should be required to use the inflatable properly, in accordance with its design.
  - For example, the bounce house operator should make sure that children are bouncing on their feet (not their backs). If there is a slide, children should be required to go down feet-first, not head-first. Using the equipment properly can help prevent injuries.
- to reduce the risk of injury, children should be directed to remove their shoes, eyeglasses and jewelry, and to remove all sharp objects from their pockets, before entering the bouncer.

Bounce houses are not babysitters

Supervisors, operators, volunteers should work together to make sure that children are bouncing safely, and that they are not rough-housing, doing flips or somersaults, or landing on other children.

Safety Checklist of Inflatable for Operator

Without the inflatables functioning properly the item cannot be used.

1. Check the weather forecast.

Check the weather of the day
Operator should always pay attention to the changes in the weather

2. Dealing with bad weather.

If it starts to rain or the wind speed increases, remove all the participants and shut down the equipment by turning off the blower(s) and removing the power source. Disconnect the blowers from the power source to prevent damage from a lightning strike, and the house should be covered by a tarp.
3. **Staking or anchoring.**

Whether you are setting it up indoors or outdoors, the inflatable jumper should always be fixed to the ground firmly. For commercial grade inflatable bouncers, 30 to 42 inches steel stakes or sandbags. The stakes should be at least 75% into the ground and the sandbags should be a minimum of 75 pounds each. And don’t miss any D-ring anchors on the inflatable structure. The ends of the stakes should be marked and covered to prevent a tripping or impalement hazard.

4. **Check the power source of the blower.**

Check the blower power cord and plug end for damage before you plug it in. The power source should be a dedicated circuit for the blower and should be on a GFCI outlet. Use wide duct tape to secure the cord to any walking surfaces to prevent a trip hazard. Then make sure the extra inflation tubes are sealed when connecting the blower to the inflatable unit.

5. **Quick and final check before use.**

Before the participants walk in the bounce house, operator should do a quick and final safety check of the unit. This can help you discover any potential problems of the unit, includes the roof support columns, pillars, steps and mattress. Make sure the inflatable is in good working condition.

6. **Supervise the inflatable during use.**

The operator and supervisor should be responsible for what happens to the unit. They should check the stake/anchor points, blower and tubes, and other places of the unit regularly. If they find any failure of a seam, hole, or rip, they must remove all the participants immediately and shut down the unit for a more detailed safety check.

7. **Similar size of players should be grouped together.**

For safety, children of different sizes cannot be bouncing at the same time. Operator should read the manufacturer’s information plate carefully, do not allow an 11-12 year old kid enter the bounce house while a group of 7-8 year old is jumping. Never let the total weight of the participants exceed the weight limit of the unit.

8. **Inappropriate objects are not allowed in.**

Everybody should keep in mind that a sharp object can cause injury risks to both participants and the inflatable unit. As operator, you should check every child’s pocket carefully. Shoes, jewelry, glasses, silly string, makers, foods, and drinks should never be used inside or around unit.

9. **Rough play is not allowed.**

Operator and supervisor must pay attention to the actions of players. The energetic kids always want to flip, do somersaults or cartwheels and similar acrobatics, some even wrestling. These can cause injuries so adults must always keep an eye on the kids.
10. Cleaning and sanitizing

After every use, the inflatable bouncer should be cleaned and sanitized. Do on-site cleaning after setup. This can help you win the trust of your customers and you can do it while inspecting the inflatable unit.

Make sure the operator follows the checklist. Tell everyone to work together to ensure the safety of your parties and events.
Inflatable Inspection Checklist

Date ______________ Owner __________________________ Type __________________________
Ride Location Name ____________________________________________
Ride Location Address ____________________________________________ County ____________ Zip ____________

I acknowledge and agree that I have been given proper instructions for set up, dismantle, and safe operating procedures for the inflatable attraction I am setting up/leasing.

Name Printed __________________________ Signature __________________________ Date ____________

All Items Must Be Marked Off Accordingly

**Electrical / Generator**
- Over-current protection, proper wire size and type. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Proper electrical connections and in good repair. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Fire protection. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Generator location, guarding and in good repair. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA

**General Conditions**
- Access and Egress. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Area level, clear of debris and sharp objects. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Interior clean and free of debris. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Overall conditions cuts netting etc. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Number of tethers (tie downs) _______ per mfg. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Anchor stakes. Length _______ % in the ground _______ [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Weight of anchor bags _______ Number of bags _______ per mfg. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Blow guards and intake sleeves in good repair. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Number of blowers for the devise _______ per mfg. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA

**Operation**
- Safety rules posted. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Restriction signs posted, Height restrictions _______ inches. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Maximum number of passengers __________________________ [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Trained operator present at all times __________________________ [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA
- Required number of operators _______ per mfg. [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA

**Inspection**
I certified I had received training and qualified to perform a pre-safety inspection of this inflatable and the inspection was performed according to the manufacturer’s specifications and Diocese guidelines.

Name Printed __________________________ Signature __________________________ Date ____________

**Operation**
I certified I had received training on how to operate the inflatable safely in accordance to the manufacturer’s specifications.

Name Printed __________________________ Signature __________________________ Date ____________

*Any safety deficiencies which are identified must be indicated in Column NO. It is your obligation to correct any identified deficiencies before operation. A copy of this checklist must be kept on-site with the inflatable and made available to insurance inspectors.*
WAIVER AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY

WARNING:

BOUNCING ON A BOUNCE HOUSE / INFLATABLE MAY PRODUCE INJURY AND/OR DEATH

READ THE DOCUMENT CAREFULLY

I ____________________________ ("I"), have voluntarily elected to allow my child(ren) to participate in playing on bounce house(s), and I fully understand that this involves jumping on air filled entertainment toy(s) and that there are health and safety risks associated with this type of activity. I, therefore, assume all risk of injury and/or death associated with this event and I will not hold the event organizers, sponsors, or anyone affiliated with them for any circumstances of this event.

I hereby confirm that my child(ren) are in good physical condition and do not suffer from any disabilities or physical conditions that places me or others at risk or otherwise should prohibit their participation in this even.

I hereby waive and release, indemnify, hold harmless and forever discharge the Roman Catholic Diocese of Amarillo, the owner of the premises the inflatable(s) is used, and its entities, including all parent companies, affiliates, subsidiaries, assigns, their volunteers, agents, sponsors, servants, employees, officers, directors, affiliates, successors and assigns, and their respective heirs, representatives, legal counsel, licensees and all persons, firms, corporations liable or who might be liable, whether or not herein named, none whom admit any liability to the undersigned, but all expressly denying liability (herein the “Released Parties” and collectively with I the “Parties”), from any and all claims, demands, debts, contracts, expenses, causes of action, lawsuits, damages and liabilities, of every kind and nature, whether known or unknown, in law or equity, which I have or may hereafter have, arising from or in any way relating to my child(ren)’s participation in any of the events or activities conducted by the Released Parties on the date that the inflatable(s) is/are used, on the premises of the Released Parties, or for the benefit of the Released Parties.

I understand that the activities that they will participate in one the date the inflatable(s) is/are used are inherently dangerous and my and child(ren)’s participation may cause harm or grievous injuries, including bodily injury, damage to personal property and/or death. I, on behalf of myself, my spouse, heirs, executors, administrators, representatives, successors, assigns and next of kin, waive all claims for damages, injuries and death sustained to me, my child(ren) or my property that I may have against the aforementioned Released Parties to such activity.

By this WAIVER AND RELEASE, I assume any risk, and take full responsibility and warranty of any and all claims of personal injury and death or damages to but not limited to my use of the Released Parties’ facilities and/or engaging in the Release Parties’
activities or other activities on and near the Release Parties’ premises on the date the inflatable(s) are used.

This WAIVER AND RELEASE contains the full and complete agreement between the Parties, the terms are contractual and not merely a recital, and supersedes any and all prior written or oral agreements and representations between the Parties concerning the activities and the WAIVER AND RELEASE. Any additions to or changes in this WAIVER AND RELEASE shall be valid only if set forth in writing and signed by all the Parties. Furthermore, this WAIVER AND RELEASE is binding upon the undersigned and his/her respective spouse, heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators, representatives, successors and assigns. This WAIVER AND RELEASE shall be subject to the laws of the State of Texas. The provisions of this WAIVER AND RELEASE will remain in issue and in full force and effect even after termination of the Parties’ activities.

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and fully agree to the terms of this WAIVER AND RELEASE and its contents. I understand and confirm that by signing this WAIVER AND RELEASE I have given up considerable future legal rights. I have signed this WAIVER AND RELEASE voluntarily, under no duress or threat of duress, without inducement, promise, or guarantee being communicated to me. My signature is proof of my intention to execute a complete and unconditional WAIVER AND RELEASE of all liability to the full extent of the law. I am 18 years of age or older and mentally competent to enter into this waiver.

RULES-

Bounce house / inflatable limits are ________ # total weight and/or ________ # children.

There MUST be an adult watching bounce house / inflatable when children are ALWAYS playing!

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Child(ren) Name(s) First and Last

Undersigned is waiving “negligence claims, gross negligence claims, personal injury claims, and mental anguish claims.”

[Signature of Parent/Guardian]

[Parent/Guardian Printed Name]

________________________________________

Date