Festival Safety

Each year, several organizations host festivals such as fall harvests, summer carnivals, Halloween-alternative parties or other festivities to reach out to children and their communities.

Because these activities often attract many people, it is important to inspect your grounds and facilities before the time of your festival, looking particularly for slip-and-fall dangers and other potential hazards. It is recommended that you follow an established inspection checklist, but do not overlook the following when planning an outdoor event:

- Make sure all cords (power, speakers, microphones, etc.) are kept away from walkways. If that cannot be avoided, cover them with cord protectors or have them held down and marked with visibly colored tape.
- If large, outdoor tents are used, make sure the stakes and ropes are visibly marked and protected. Further, the tents should be erected by a professional company and inspected by a qualified individual before use.
- Depressions and holes in grassy areas should either be filled or visibly marked. Consider planning activities away from any such hazards.
- Make sure that any temporary (folding) tables and chairs set up are sturdy and free from defects. Maintain sufficiently wide aisles to accommodate
- Monitor weather reports and make alternative plans in case the weather appears threatening.



To warn of the trip and fall hazards from the tent stakes, the use of orange safety cones is simple and effective.

Popular Festival Activities – Inflatable Rides

Some of the most popular activities at these festivals include inflatable rides. The US Consumer Product Safety Commission defines an inflatable amusement ride as an air-filled structure for recreational use, made of flexible fabric, kept inflated by continuous air flow by one or more blowers, and relying upon air pressure to maintain its shape.

The most common accidents are caused by children colliding into each other, primarily from allowing younger children to jump with older children or the children not being the same size. Additionally, falls and awkward landings are other common accidents associated with inflatable rides. The most serious accidents are caused by equipment or operator failure, such as the inflatable ride tipping over, blowing over or collapsing.



Moon Bounce



Slide



Obstacle Course

Safety Measures for Inflatable Rides

Safety is of the utmost importance when using an inflatable ride at your organization's event. Follow these measures to help ensure the well-being of all who participate in this activity:

- Rent from a reputable, insured business. Require a certificate of general liability insurance and have your organization named as an additional insured on the rental company's insurance.
- Installation and tear down should be completed by the rental company.
- Adult supervision is always required and training for supervisors (if not using trained rental company supervisors) should be provided by the rental company. This training should cover all operating and safety procedures, both verbally and in writing, including age, weight and occupancy limits.
- All equipment should be provided with a label stating the proper age and weight of users. In addition, only participants of compatible ages and sizes should play in the unit at the same time. The maximum number of participants of each group that should play in the unit at one time should conform to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Set up the inflatable on soft, level surfaces, such as grass. A tarp should be placed on the ground to protect the bottom of the unit. To the greatest extent possible, avoid hard surfaces, such as concrete or asphalt where more severe injuries can occur from children falling out. Fall zones (exit/entrance) should be adequately padded.
- Properly anchor according to the manufacturer's recommendations. If on grass, use stakes. If on hard surfaces, use sandbags, water bags or metal weights.
- When using inflatables outdoors, the blower motor should be plugged into an electrical outlet that is ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected. If a GFCI outlet is not available, a GFCI extension cord may be utilized. Extension cords should be rated for outdoor use and of the correct size (gauge) for the equipment operated.
- Before use, inspect the inflatable to make sure the ride is fully inflated, not sagging, and free from visible tears, rips or holes. If any of these conditions are present, the inflatable should be shut down until repairs can be made.
- Do not use it if wind speeds will exceed the manufacturer's recommendation. This is typically in the 15 to 25 mph range. However, if wind speeds are 25 mph and greater, unload and deflate the ride.
- If outdoors, monitor weather forecasts closely. Do not operate if wet conditions (rain) are present or if threatening weather is approaching.

Taking the Necessary Precautions

Accidents can and do happen. But, by following the recommended safety guidelines listed in this fact sheet, your organization can be better prepared to host these types of events and will reduce the chances of experiencing an accident during your festival.

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