Extreme Heat Guidance

HOT SURFACES | HYDRATION | USER WELFARE | 2026-27 REVIEW CYCLE

Document Ref	Version	Status	Issue Date	Next Review	Owner
RI-GD-001	2.1	APPROVED	01 Oct 2026	01 Oct 2027*	Rugby Inflatables

Purpose and scope

This guidance manages risks from hot inflatable surfaces, dehydration, exertion and heat-related illness during warm or extreme weather. It applies to outdoor Rugby Inflatables hires and staffed events. It supports, but does not replace, the relevant risk assessment, supervision procedure and medical/emergency advice.

Heat safety principle

Direct sunlight can make inflatable surfaces substantially hotter than the surrounding air.

Active bouncing, climbing and sliding increase body heat and fluid loss.

There is no single air-temperature or inflatable-surface threshold in HSE guidance that makes every hire safe or unsafe. Decisions must consider actual surface condition, sun exposure, humidity, duration, user welfare and available controls.

Use must be shortened, paused or stopped where the surface causes pain/discomfort, users show heat-related symptoms or conditions cannot be controlled.

Planning information - not a permission to operate

Check Met Office forecasts and relevant UKHSA Heat-Health Alerts as planning information. Alerts are population-health warnings, not operating limits for inflatables. A hire can be unsafe below an alert threshold, and an alert does not mean equipment can safely operate if site conditions are controlled.

Basis of the 2026-27 revision

Updated against the UKHSA/Met Office Weather-Health Alert system current in 2026 and NHS heat-exhaustion/heatstroke advice. The revision removes reliance on a simple hand-touch check as the only control, strengthens symptom escalation and clarifies that no unsupported numeric surface-temperature limit is being invented.

No universal temperature number

Rugby Inflatables does not use an invented maximum air or surface temperature as a substitute for risk assessment. Stop earlier whenever the equipment or user condition indicates danger.

1. Before the hire and before use

RESPONSIBLE: RI OPERATOR / SETUP LEAD / RESPONSIBLE SUPERVISOR

1.1 Review forecast and site exposure

Consider forecast temperature, direct sun, cloud cover, humidity, breeze, duration and the period of strongest sun.

Check whether users have access to drinking water and a shaded/cool rest area.

Consider the colour/orientation of the inflatable, exposed slide/bed surfaces and whether meaningful shade can be provided without interfering with anchorage or airflow.

Where heat cannot be controlled, discuss an indoor alternative/reschedule/cancellation under business policy.

1.2 Assess the actual inflatable surface

Before admission, inspect the main bouncing bed, entrance, steps, platform and slide surfaces that skin may contact.

Use direct measurement (for example a suitable surface/IR thermometer) where available, especially in strong sun; interpret readings cautiously because material, angle and device accuracy can affect results.

A hand contact may identify obvious heat but should not be the sole test in borderline conditions.

Do not admit users to a surface that is painful/uncomfortably hot or likely to cause a burn.

1.3 Brief the supervisor

Explain hydration/rest expectations, heat symptoms, surface re-checks, stop authority and that shoes remain prohibited unless the unit rules specifically state otherwise. Socks may reduce minor contact discomfort but are not a control for an excessively hot surface.

HOLD POINT - before release

No suitable supervision, no accessible water/rest arrangement in significant heat, or a surface that cannot be kept comfortable means no use until conditions improve.

2. Managing heat during use

RESPONSIBLE: NAMED SUPERVISOR / RI ATTENDANT AT STAFFED EVENTS

2.1 Active supervision

Keep the inflatable under constant active supervision and watch both behaviour and signs of heat stress.

Reduce user numbers/session length if exertion is increasing fatigue or users are not taking breaks.

Re-check sun-exposed contact surfaces regularly and whenever cloud/sun conditions materially change.

2.2 Water and rest

Encourage regular water breaks; do not rely on children to ask only when they feel thirsty.

Keep drinking water available nearby but do not allow drinks, bottles or food onto the inflatable.

Use a shaded/cool rest area and allow users to cool before returning.

Avoid continuous prolonged bouncing during the hottest part of the day.

2.3 Clothing and user factors

Use light, breathable clothing suitable for active play.

Shoes and sharp items remain removed under normal inflatable rules.

Take extra care with younger children and anyone whose health, medication or ability to communicate discomfort may increase risk; the responsible adult should apply appropriate personal/medical advice.

2.4 Surface control

If a surface becomes uncomfortable, stop that activity and clear users. Shade/cooling arrangements must not introduce electrical, slip, anchorage or material-damage hazards. Water must not be used on dry-use Rugby Inflatables units as a cooling method.

3. Symptoms, first response and stop criteria

RESPONSIBLE: SUPERVISOR / FIRST AIDER / EVENT LEAD

3.1 Signs of heat exhaustion

NHS symptoms include tiredness, dizziness, headache, nausea/vomiting, excessive sweating, pale/clammy skin, cramps, high temperature, thirst and irritability. Children may not clearly describe symptoms, so changes in behaviour, coordination or energy should be taken seriously.

3.2 Initial response

Stop activity and move the person to a cool/shaded place.

Remove unnecessary outer clothing, give cool fluids if conscious and able to drink, and cool the skin.

Stay with the person and seek NHS advice where recovery is uncertain.

3.3 Suspected heatstroke - emergency

Call 999 for serious signs such as confusion/lack of coordination, seizure, loss of consciousness, very high temperature, hot skin without sweating, rapid deterioration, or if heat-exhaustion symptoms do not improve after about 30 minutes of cooling and fluids. Follow the emergency-call handler's instructions.

3.4 Stop / pause criteria

Surface is painful or uncomfortably hot.

A user shows heat-related symptoms, distress or abnormal fatigue.

Water/rest/shade arrangements are inadequate for the conditions.

Supervision cannot maintain safe breaks and observation.

Electrical/weather/airflow measures needed to cool the area would create another hazard.

Restart only after reassessment

A pause is not complete simply because a cloud passes. Re-check the surface, users, sun exposure and control measures before readmission.

4. Records, responsibilities and related controls

RESPONSIBLE: OWNER / SUPERVISOR / DOCUMENT CONTROLLER

4.1 Records and escalation

Record significant heat decisions where a hire is delayed, paused, stopped or cancelled for safety.

Record any heat-related incident/near miss under the incident procedure and follow RI-EP-001 for serious illness.

Review the risk assessment/control method after an incident or repeated heat problem.

Role Responsibility

Rugby Inflatables operator Review planning information and actual site/surface conditions, brief the customer, refuse/pause/cancel where heat cannot be controlled and provide the applicable safety information.

Responsible hirer / nominated adult Maintain active supervision, provide/encourage hydration and rest, monitor users and surfaces, and stop use when heat creates unsafe conditions.

Rugby Inflatables attendant At staffed events, enforce session/rest controls, monitor heat and users, stop activity and escalate symptoms or unsafe conditions.

Venue / event organiser Support access to water/shade/first aid and wider heat-event arrangements where those facilities form part of the event plan.

Related controlled documents

RI-SOP-002 Supervision & Safe Operation; RI-EP-001 Emergency Procedures; RI-RA-001 Bouncy Castle Risk Assessment; RI-RA-002 Bounce & Slide Combo Risk Assessment; RI-GD-002 Wind & Adverse Weather Guidance; relevant venue/event plans.

Technical sources checked 01 October 2026 UKHSA Weather-Health Alerting System (updated 22 April 2026) and 2026 Heat-Health Alert information; NHS Heat exhaustion and heatstroke; HSE general risk-management duties and current inflatable safety guidance. These sources do not prescribe a universal maximum inflatable-surface temperature.

Revision history

Version	Date	Change	Status
2.0	Aug 2026	Previous approved Extreme Heat Guidance.	Superseded
2.1	01 Oct 2026	2026-27 revision: alert-system context, stronger surface assessment, no invented temperature limit, water/rest controls, NHS symptom escalation and explicit restart criteria.	Approved