SAFETY • COMPLIANCE • PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Risk Assessment - Bouncy Castle

RI-RA-001 | Version 2.4 | APPROVED

Document Ref	Version	Status	Issue Date	Review	Owner
RI-RA-001	2.4	APPROVED	03 October 2026	By 03 October 2027*	Rugby Inflatables

Purpose and scope

Delivery, positioning, installation, supervised use, shutdown and collection of standard continuous-air bouncy castles, including low-height bounce-only units. Covers indoor venues and permitted outdoor grass/soil sites. User suitability, permitted user heights and maximum user numbers are unit-specific and must follow the manufacturer's instructions, user label and current inspection/registration information. Slides, bounce-and-slide combis, obstacle courses, games and speakers need their separate equipment assessments.

Operating boundaries

Rugby Inflatables policy: indoor-only October to 31 March; outdoor hires resume in April, subject to suitability. No outdoor hard standing or artificial grass, overnight or unattended operation. Outdoor controls remain in this assessment for the permitted season. Marquees and open-sided shelters are not automatically indoor environments.

Risk scoring

Scale	1	3	5
Likelihood	Unlikely with effective controls	Possible	Likely / expected
Severity	Minor injury / first aid	Serious injury / hospital treatment	Fatality / permanent disabling injury

Scores 1-3: maintain controls. Score 5: controlled but potentially fatal hazard - verify every critical control. Scores 9-15: do not start; reduce risk and reassess. Score 25: unacceptable - stop. These are proposed RI action bands, not statutory thresholds. Tables show initial L x S = score before the listed controls and residual L / S / score only after all controls are verified. Severity is not reduced simply because precautions exist. Any missing critical control overrides the numerical score. Ratings are planning judgements, not measured probabilities; reassess for each hire. *Review sooner after an incident, near miss, defect, new guidance, equipment change or material change in site/use. Approved 03 October 2026. Revision 2.4 corrects the earlier fleet-wide children-only wording and makes the individual manufacturer/user-label suitability, user-height and capacity limits controlling. This revision supersedes v2.3. Hire records: Complete the online handover checklist for each booking, including site-specific hazards, setup checks, supervisor briefing and links to monitoring records. Read this assessment with the unit manual and RI emergency procedures.

Assessment table

Planning, delivery and positioning | I/O = indoor and outdoor; O = outdoor; I = indoor

Hazard / setting	Potential harm / at risk	Required controls	Initial	L	S	Score	Responsibility / action
01 / Unsuitable site or restricted access I/O	Crush, collision, falls or inability to evacuate. Staff, users and public.	Check route width, turns, steps, gates and carrying distance before arrival. Confirm full operating footprint including blower, anchors, mats and escape space. Inspect the actual site; a customer photograph or previous hire is not proof of suitability.	3 x 3 = 9	1	3	3	RI setup lead: agree safe access with venue/hirer. Reposition or decline if the required footprint and access cannot be achieved.
02 / Unloading and manual handling I/O	Back/limb injury, trapped hands or feet, dropped load. Staff and bystanders.	Assess roll weight, terrain and handling route. Use suitable trolley and vehicle loading aids; sufficient trained help for awkward/heavy loads. Keep hands clear of pinch points, secure the roll and clear the public from unloading. Do not drag equipment through occupied rooms.	3 x 3 = 9	1	3	3	RI team: stop if load or route exceeds safe capability. Arrange help/equipment; allow sufficient setup and collection time.
03 / Ground, slope and nearby hazards I/O	Falls, unit movement, contact with traffic, water or sharp objects. All persons.	Inspect for holes, debris, glass, animal waste, standing water and changes in level. Position away from roads, ponds, drops, fences and branches. Use the manufacturer's siting limits; do not invent an acceptable slope. Protect the base as instructed.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI lead: record suitability. Fence off adjacent hazards where effective; otherwise relocate or refuse. Check again after rain or ground deterioration.
04 / Services and stake installation O	Electric shock, gas escape, flooding or tool injury. Staff and public.	Plan stake locations using site information and service plans where relevant. Ask about garden lighting, drains, utilities and recent works; verbal assurance alone is insufficient where uncertainty remains. Arrange competent locating where required. Exclude public while hammering; use suitable tools and protective footwear.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI lead: do not drive stakes where service risk is unresolved. Move to a verified area or decline; never substitute inadequate weights.

Residual ratings apply only when every listed control is in place. Stop for any missing critical control, regardless of the score.

Assessment table

Outdoor anchorage and weather | I/O = indoor and outdoor; O = outdoor; I = indoor

Hazard / setting	Potential harm / at risk	Required controls	Initial	L	S	Score	Responsibility / action
05 / Anchorage failure outdoors O	Lift, overturn, ejection or impact; potentially fatal. All persons.	Outdoor grass/soil only. Use all anchors: minimum six; stakes at least 380 mm x 16 mm, with rounded tops and welded O/D rings. Check straps, seams and soil hold. Follow any stricter unit instructions. No attachment to fences, vehicles or improvised supports.	5 x 5 = 25	1	5	5	RI lead verifies before handover; supervisor checks during hire and after change. Stop for loose stakes, torn anchors or ground failure; RI must rectify.
06 / Wind and sudden gusts O	Lift or collapse causing fatal injury. Users, staff and public.	Use and record anemometer readings; forecasts do not replace site readings. Maximum 24 mph or the lower manufacturer limit. RI stop point is at the limit, including gusts, or earlier if instability develops. Agree a lower warning trigger and monitoring interval before hire.	5 x 5 = 25	1	5	5	RI checks forecast through collection. Supervisor increases monitoring as conditions change; clear users early, then safely deflate. No outdoor use without working meter or competent monitoring.
07 / Rain, storms, lightning, ice O	Slips, electrical exposure, collapse or lightning injury. All persons.	Stop for heavy rain, slippery play surfaces, pooling, thunder/lightning nearby, hail, frost or ice. Evacuate before planned deflation; isolate power only from a safe dry point. Do not leave people handling anchors or wet equipment during a storm. Direct guests to suitable shelter.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	Supervisor closes immediately. RI assesses restart after conditions clear: dry surfaces, stable ground, sound electrics and anchorage. No automatic restart when rain stops.
08 / Heat, cold and exposure I/O	Burns, dehydration, heat illness or cold-related distress. Users and supervisors.	Check contact surfaces and enclosed play-space comfort before opening and as sunlight changes. Pause if surfaces are painfully hot or conditions cause distress. Offer rest, water and shade off the castle; shorten sessions where appropriate. Do not drape covers over the inflatable or blower.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	Supervisor watches for symptoms; stop and seek appropriate assistance. RI rechecks site/conditions before reopening; follow the business heat guidance.

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Assessment table

Indoor venue controls | I/O = indoor and outdoor; O = outdoor; I = indoor

Hazard / setting	Potential harm / at risk	Required controls	Initial	L	S	Score	Responsibility / action
09 / Ceiling and overhead fittings I	Head/neck injury, falling fittings or electrical contact. Users and public.	Measure the lowest chandelier, beam, light, fan, projector or other fitting over the whole operating area. Allow manufacturer clearance above the inflated unit and users' movement. A nominal hall height or a low-height castle does not establish a safe fit. Prevent contact with walls and glazing.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI lead records measured minimum height and required clearance. Obtain venue agreement on isolation of fans if needed; refuse if safe clearance cannot be demonstrated.
10 / Indoor movement or overturn I	Displacement, collapse, trapped users. Users and public.	Follow unit-specific indoor anchorage instructions. Select secure ballast/fixings of the required type and mass; record quantities and attachment positions. Do not assume a few sandbags are enough. Protect floors and stop weights sliding; no improvised ties to furniture, radiators or unapproved building fixtures.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI lead verifies the arrangement before use. Supervisor checks movement/attachments; stop and call RI if the castle creeps or ballast shifts.
11 / Hard floors and landing area I	Head injury, fractures, slips or trips at the entrance. Users and public.	Provide suitable impact-absorbing protection wherever a foreseeable fall could reach hard floor, in line with the unit instructions. Entrance mats must be no more than 2 inches deep. Fit mats without gaps, curling edges or sliding; a thin groundsheet is not impact protection. Keep shoes and bags away.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI lead checks extent and stability; supervisor restores displaced mats before further use. Keep furniture, queues and doors outside landing areas.
12 / Exits, doors and air movement I	Delayed evacuation, collision, unexpected wind or overheating. All persons.	Keep fire exits, escape routes, fire equipment and door swings clear, including the likely footprint of a deflated unit. Agree layout with the venue. Assess draughts from open loading doors; do not treat an open-sided structure as wind-free. Maintain ventilation without compromising safe operation.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	Venue/RI agree evacuation route and assembly point. Supervisor stops if exits become obstructed, strong draughts affect the unit or the room becomes unsuitable.

Residual ratings apply only when every listed control is in place. Stop for any missing critical control, regardless of the score.

Assessment table

Inflation, structure and electrical supply | I/O = indoor and outdoor; O = outdoor; I = indoor

Hazard / setting	Potential harm / at risk	Required controls	Initial	L	S	Score	Responsibility / action
13 / Damage or unverified equipment I/O	Structural failure, unpredictable bounce, falls or entrapment. Users.	Match unit identity to inspection record; check initial test and current annual competent inspection. Examine fabric, seams, netting, entrance, anchors and repairs. Inflate empty and inspect for distortion. Carry out a pre-use deflation check; reject unsafe collapse/escape behaviour. Reinflate and verify before admitting users.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI lead records checks and defects. Quarantine failed equipment; repairs and return to service need competent assessment. A test certificate does not override a present defect.
14 / Wrong pressure or blower I/O	Soft bed, loss of containment or fabric failure. Users.	Use the specified blower. Record manometer readings before and regularly during use within manufacturer pressure limits; no suitable gauge means no operation. Check blower flap daily. Secure inflation sleeve and close deflation openings as instructed. Keep air intake clear; never cover a running blower.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI sets pressure range and check interval at handover. Competent person measures/records. Stop if out of range; investigate before restart. Do not leave untrained hirers to diagnose faults.
15 / Electric shock or overheating I/O	Shock, burns or fire. Staff, users and public.	Use a suitable supply, 30 mA RCD protection and appropriately rated leads/connectors. Check cables, plugs, guards and housings before hire; maintain inspection/testing records. Keep connections dry, protected from damage and away from pooling. Fully unwind reels and avoid overloaded adaptors or improvised extensions.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI lead tests RCD operation as instructed and confirms supply capacity. Stop for heat, damage, wet connections or tripping. Isolate safely; competent repair only. PAT label alone is insufficient.
16 / Power interruption / rapid deflation I/O	Falls, trapping beneath fabric or distress. Users.	Identify and protect the supply switch; prevent accidental unplugging or venue timer shutdown. Show supervisor the evacuation route and loss-of-air signs. Stop play and help everyone out immediately on pressure loss. Keep others away from collapsing fabric; never crawl underneath to retrieve property.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	Supervisor accounts for users and summons help if trapped/injured. RI investigates loss of supply/air; no repeated resets or automatic restart. Recheck complete setup before reuse.

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Assessment table

Access, supervision and user control | I/O = indoor and outdoor; O = outdoor; I = indoor

Hazard / setting	Potential harm / at risk	Required controls	Initial	L	S	Score	Responsibility / action
17 / Blower, cables and restricted zones I/O	Trips, fan contact, entanglement or loss of air. All persons.	Restrict access behind and alongside the castle to keep people away from blower, tube, ropes and ballast. Route leads away from circulation; use suitable cable protection at unavoidable crossings. Keep blower guards intact. Store unused equipment out of reach; do not block ventilation with barriers.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI establishes exclusion area. Supervisor prevents tampering and checks cables/mats remain secure. Users or members of the public must not retrieve objects from beneath or behind the unit.
18 / Absent or distracted supervision I/O	Unsafe behaviour, overcrowding and delayed rescue. Users.	A named, briefed person aged 18+ must continuously watch the entrance and play area. Provide enough supervisors for visibility, user needs and event demand. Do not combine supervision with distracting duties. Arrange briefed relief cover. Stop admission and clear the unit before the supervisor leaves.	5 x 5 = 25	1	5	5	RI demonstrates rules and checks understanding at handover. Hirer maintains cover; a signature alone is not evidence of competence. No suitable supervisor means no operation.
19 / Excess numbers / mixed sizes I/O	Collision, crush injury or unpredictable bounce. Users.	Use the specific unit's manufacturer/user-label suitability and height-based capacity; never use a fleet-wide assumed number. Confirm the permitted user group(s), maximum user height and capacity for that height. Where adults are permitted by the unit information, they remain subject to those limits. Separate significantly different sizes/abilities into sessions. Count entrants and exits; reduce numbers for the actual group where needed. Keep waiting users outside the landing area.	3 x 3 = 9	1	3	3	Supervisor controls admission throughout. RI writes capacity and height limits on the hire record. Stop overcrowding immediately; restart only with a suitable group.
20 / Rough play / climbing walls I/O	Falls, collision, serious head or neck injury. Users.	Prohibit wrestling, pushing, flips, somersaults, climbing and hanging on walls/netting. No bouncing on the entrance step or jumping out. Explain rules in age-appropriate language. Intervene early; stop the session if behaviour cannot be controlled. Keep users away from a fallen or distressed user.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	Supervisor removes unsafe behaviour from the session and reassesses group size. Do not rely on a sign alone; maintain a clear line of sight.

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Assessment table

Participant needs and safe play | I/O = indoor and outdoor; O = outdoor; I = indoor

Hazard / setting	Potential harm / at risk	Required controls	Initial	L	S	Score	Responsibility / action
21 / Entry, exit and footwear I/O	Collision, trips, falls and cuts. Users.	Control entry and exit so users do not collide or pile up. Remove shoes and sharp/loose possessions; manage glasses in accordance with instructions and individual needs before admission. Do not allow someone to remain lying at the entrance. Assist entry from a stable position without pulling on the unit.	3 x 3 = 9	1	3	3	Supervisor checks entrance and mats continuously. Resolve accessibility/essential aid needs with RI before use; no improvised ramps or lifting arrangements.
22 / Food, small objects and clothing I/O	Choking, entanglement, cuts or punctures. Users.	No food, drink, gum, balloons or toys on the castle. Empty pockets; remove jewellery, badges and sharp objects. Remove neck cords and loose accessories that could snag. Inspect play area between sessions for dropped objects. Keep refreshments away from the entrance.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	Supervisor checks users and enforces rules. Stop for choking or entanglement; summon first aid and emergency help as needed. Remove hazard before reopening.
23 / Individual health or support needs I/O	Worsened injury, distress or unsafe participation. Users and helpers.	Ask the user or, where applicable, parent/carer to consider suitability against instructions and known health restrictions; staff must not give medical clearance. Plan additional support for communication, mobility or sensory needs. Do not exclude solely on a diagnosis; assess actual needs. No intoxicated participant or supervisor.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI/hirer agree a safe arrangement before admission; seek clinical advice if suitability is uncertain. Any helper entering the inflatable must also be permitted by the unit's manufacturer/user limits; do not exceed suitability, height or capacity limits to accommodate assistance.
24 / Illness, contamination and animals I/O	Infection, allergic reaction, bites or slips. Users and staff.	Keep pets off the unit and away from access. Do not admit visibly unwell users likely to contaminate the surface. Stop and isolate affected area after bodily-fluid contamination. Clean/disinfect using suitable products and required contact time; rinse/dry as directed. Store chemicals away from children. No face paint under RI policy.	3 x 3 = 9	1	3	3	RI manages cleaning under product/COSHH instructions with suitable gloves. Do not reopen until contamination and chemical residue are removed and surfaces are dry.

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Assessment table

Shared surroundings and changing conditions | I/O = indoor and outdoor; O = outdoor; I = indoor

Hazard / setting	Potential harm / at risk	Required controls	Initial	L	S	Score	Responsibility / action
25 / Fire, heat and smoke I/O	Burns, smoke exposure or rapid loss of the unit. All persons.	No smoking, flames or hot equipment near the castle. RI minimum barbecue separation is 10 m; increase for smoke, sparks or other hazards. Indoors keep clear of heaters and cooking areas. No combustion-powered equipment indoors. Generator use needs a separate assessment and suitable separation outdoors.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI/organiser check adjacent activities. Supervisor stops and evacuates for fire/smoke; follow venue/event arrangements. Call 999 where required; do not delay evacuation to save equipment.
26 / Queues and neighbouring activities I/O	Crowd pressure, collision or obstructed exit. Users and public.	Position queue away from landing area, cables and anchorage; keep a clear way out. Separate ball games, vehicles, catering and other attractions. Use suitable barriers without introducing sharp edges or entrapment. A public event may need a separate attendant to manage admission.	3 x 3 = 9	1	3	3	Hirer/organiser manages surroundings; supervisor pauses admission when crowding develops. Event-wide crowd control remains in the event assessment.
27 / Poor visibility, noise and communication I/O	Missed distress, misunderstood instructions or falls. Users and staff.	Provide lighting sufficient to see all users, entrance and hazards. No dark or strobe-only sessions. Position supervision so blower/music noise does not prevent instructions being heard. Check that alarm and stop signals can be recognised. Do not place speakers or loose electrical equipment on the unit.	3 x 3 = 9	1	3	3	RI and hirer confirm clear sightlines and signals. Supervisor stops if lighting fails, sightlines are blocked or effective communication is lost.
28 / Unauthorised changes or restart I/O	Loss of safe clearances, anchorage or pressure. All persons.	Hirer must not move the unit, remove anchors, change ballast, swap blowers, add decorations/covers or alter the electrical arrangement. Do not resume following an unsafe shutdown without the agreed checks. Control access during breaks; secure the site so unauthorised users cannot access a closed or deflated unit.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	Supervisor reports changes immediately. RI authorises any alteration and repeats relevant checks; significant changes need a fresh site assessment.

Residual ratings apply only when every listed control is in place. Stop for any missing critical control, regardless of the score.

Assessment table

Emergencies, closure and collection | I/O = indoor and outdoor; O = outdoor; I = indoor

Hazard / setting	Potential harm / at risk	Required controls	Initial	L	S	Score	Responsibility / action
29 / Injury or medical emergency I/O	Delayed treatment, worsening injury or uncontrolled evacuation. Users.	Agree first-aid arrangements, site address and emergency access before opening; keep a working phone available. Stop other users and clear the area safely. Call 999 for serious injury, breathing difficulty or trapped persons. Avoid unnecessary movement of a suspected spinal injury; follow emergency-service instructions.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	Supervisor seeks help and informs RI. Keep inflation if it supports safe care and there is no greater hazard; manage power/deflation with emergency responders as appropriate.
30 / Unsafe deflation / packing I/O	Entrapment, crush injury or uncontrolled movement. Staff and public.	Count users out; check inside and around the empty unit before switching off. Exclude users and the public from the work area. Deflate and release anchorage in the manufacturer's safe sequence; keep effective restraint while wind could lift fabric. No standing/jumping on the unit to accelerate packing.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	RI team only handles dismantling. Suspend work if weather makes handling unsafe. Check mats, stakes and equipment are collected and the area left safe.
31 / Wet, heavy or damaged returns I/O	Handling injury, mould or defect passed to next hire. Staff and future users.	Reassess handling weight when wet; use extra help/aids and controlled rolling/loading. Secure transport loads. Inspect at collection and record damage or contamination. Arrange drying and cleaning promptly before storage. Segregate suspect equipment so it cannot be issued by mistake.	3 x 3 = 9	1	3	3	RI team labels defects; owner controls repairs and release. Do not allow booking pressure to override drying, inspection or maintenance needs.
32 / Missed monitoring / incident learning I/O	Changing hazards remain uncontrolled; repeat incident. All persons.	Agree and record pressure/wind check intervals and who performs them. Also check after interruption, weather change, movement or impact. Recheck mats, anchors, behaviour and visibility throughout. Record incidents/near misses and preserve relevant readings, photographs and equipment details.	3 x 5 = 15	1	5	5	Supervisor stops when a required check cannot be completed. RI owner reviews causes, reporting obligations and controls before next hire; revise this assessment where needed.

Residual ratings apply only when every listed control is in place. Stop for any missing critical control, regardless of the score.