Supervision & Safe Operation of Inflatables

CONTINUOUS-AIR INFLATABLES | CUSTOMER & STAFFED SUPERVISION | 2026-27 REVIEW CYCLE

Reference / version	Status	Prepared	Review by	Owner
RI-SOP-002 / 2.3	APPROVED	03 October 2026	03 October 2027*	Rugby Inflatables

Purpose and scope

A controlled operating procedure for the active supervision, admission control, monitoring, stopping and emergency response of Rugby Inflatables standard bouncy castles and bounce-and-slide combination units while in use. It applies to the named customer supervisor and to Rugby Inflatables attendants where staffed supervision is included. The actual unit manual, inspection limits and relevant risk assessment remain controlling documents.

Operating boundaries - Rugby Inflatables policy

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. Adults may use a unit only where that specific unit permits adult use and only within those limits. Indoor-only hires run from October to 31 March; outdoor hires resume from April subject to conditions. Outdoor sites are grass/soil only under RI policy. No overnight or unattended operation. Combi units are dry-use only. Customers must not move, reposition, re-anchor, disconnect or alter the inflatable, blower, electrical supply or safety equipment.

Authority, competence and supervision

Use is permitted only while at least one suitably trained and capable supervisor is actively controlling the inflatable. The named responsible adult must be aged 18+ for customer hires. More than one supervisor/attendant must be used where the layout, numbers, combi configuration, visibility or event conditions cannot be safely controlled by one person. The supervisor has authority to stop use immediately; Rugby Inflatables may also suspend or terminate operation for safety reasons.

Basis of the 2026-27 revision

Prepared against guidance available on 01 October 2026, including HSE's inflatable safety advice updated 10 June 2026. HSE requires constant supervision by at least one suitably trained person, regular recorded wind checks outdoors using an anemometer, regular recorded internal-pressure checks using a suitable pressure measuring device, and a pre-use deflation-rate test. BSI lists BS EN 14960-1:2019 as current and under review. This procedure supports safe operation but does not certify a specific event or future legal compliance.

*Review earlier after new guidance, an incident/near miss, supervision failure, equipment defect, significant operational change or a change to unit instructions. Use the existing online handover and monitoring record; no duplicate checklist pages are attached.

1. Release to supervision and start of use

RESPONSIBLE: RI SETUP LEAD / NAMED CUSTOMER SUPERVISOR / RI ATTENDANT

1.1 Release only after the setup is complete

Do not admit users until RI-SOP-001 setup, inspection and handover requirements have been completed. The inflatable must be correctly restrained, fully inflated with the specified blower, within the manufacturer pressure limits, free from unresolved defects, provided with required impact-absorbing matting, and have clear access/exit and emergency routes. The empty pre-use loss-of-power/deflation test must have been completed and passed.

1.2 Appoint the supervisor and relief cover

Identify the named responsible adult aged 18+ for customer hires, or the assigned RI attendant for staffed events. Confirm who will provide relief for breaks and how supervision will continue without gaps. A person who is supervising cannot simultaneously carry out duties that prevent immediate observation and intervention. If adequate cover is not available, stop use.

1.3 Complete the operating handover

The supervisor must understand the actual unit limits and operating rules: permitted user group(s), user height/capacity, grouping of users where significant size or ability differences create risk, access and exit, prohibited behaviour/items, blower and anchor exclusion areas, emergency escape, RI contact details, stop triggers, and the monitoring arrangements agreed for wind and pressure. Demonstrate the instruments where the customer is responsible for readings and confirm they can use them correctly.

1.4 Control admission from the first user

Before each admission cycle, check that the entrance and landing/run-off areas are clear, the inflatable appears normally shaped and stable, mats remain secure and the blower/connection tube are undisturbed. Count users rather than estimating. Do not admit a user who is outside the unit's manufacturer/user-label suitability or height/capacity limits, or whose admission would create an unsafe imbalance with those already playing.

HOLD POINT - before first admission
No use if the required supervisor is absent or incapable, the agreed relief/monitoring arrangements cannot be delivered, the required manometer is unavailable, an outdoor anemometer is unavailable, a required reading cannot be obtained, the pre-use deflation test has failed, or any release condition remains unresolved. A signature does not replace demonstrated understanding.

2. Active supervision and safe play

RESPONSIBLE: PERSON ACTIVELY SUPERVISING THE UNIT

2.1 Position, attention and intervention

Remain close enough to see and hear the relevant play areas, entrance and exit and to intervene immediately. Do not supervise from inside a building, parked vehicle or other position that prevents effective observation. Phones, conversations, food preparation, photography, other event duties or supervising unrelated activities must not distract from the inflatable. Being present at the event is not active supervision.

2.2 User numbers, height and separation

Apply the manufacturer/user-label suitability, user-height and capacity limits for the actual unit. Adults may use a unit only where that specific unit information permits adult use and only within those limits. Separate users with significant size, height or ability differences where mixed use creates a foreseeable collision or crushing risk. Manage changeovers rather than allowing uncontrolled entry. Consider behaviour and ability as well as age; do not admit anyone whose condition, behaviour or inability to follow directions materially increases risk.

2.3 Clothing, personal items and prohibited materials

Users must remove shoes and glasses and empty pockets of sharp or dangerous items. Remove jewellery, hard/loose items and anything that could injure users or damage the inflatable. Do not allow food, drinks, chewing gum, glass, toys, party sprays or other objects onto the unit. Rugby Inflatables policy prohibits face paint on its equipment. No water, soap or wet play is permitted on dry-use units.

2.4 Behaviour rules

Stop pushing, wrestling, play fighting, deliberately bouncing another user, holding others down, flips, somersaults, cartwheels or similar gymnastics. Do not permit climbing, sitting, standing or hanging on walls, netting, entrance arches or other containment features. Users must enter and leave only through the intended access. Anyone obviously intoxicated must not use the inflatable.

2.5 Additional control for bounce-and-slide combis

The supervisor must be able to control the bounce area, climbing access, platform and slide landing/run-off. Add a second attendant where one person cannot see and control all relevant areas. Keep the climb and landing clear, prevent climbing up the slide, and release the next slider only when the route and landing are clear. Users slide seated, feet-first, one per lane unless the unit manual is stricter.

STOP GATE - supervision integrity
Stop admission and clear the unit if active supervision is interrupted, the supervisor becomes distracted or leaves position, behaviour cannot be controlled, the user mix becomes unsafe, or required relief is unavailable. Use must not continue simply because an event is busy or the hirer wants uninterrupted play.

3. Monitor equipment and conditions

RESPONSIBLE: NAMED SUPERVISOR / COMPETENT CHECKER | RI AVAILABLE FOR ESCALATION

3.1 Internal pressure - all hires

Take regular internal-pressure measurements using a suitable manometer in accordance with the manufacturer's method and the interval agreed at handover. Record each reading and compare it with the stated minimum/maximum. Visual appearance or a hand/foot 'feel' is not an acceptable substitute. If a required manometer is unavailable, the inflatable must not be operated. Stop use for abnormal pressure, unexplained pressure change or distorted shape and contact RI.

3.2 Wind - outdoor hires

Measure local wind at regular intervals using an anemometer and record the readings. Take readings in the wind direction and watch for changes in gusting or direction. Smartphone weather applications and forecasts are planning tools, not on-site measurements. Rugby Inflatables stops at 24 mph / 38 km/h including gusts, or the manufacturer's lower limit. Stop earlier if the unit becomes unstable or conditions are worsening.

3.3 Restraint, blower, mats and access

Regularly visually check that anchor points, ties and indoor restraint remain secure and undisturbed; keep users away from anchors, blower, inflation tube, switch, electrical connectors and cables. Keep the blower intake/outlet clear. Check mats remain in position without gaps, curling or slipping, and keep entrances, exits, slide landings and emergency routes clear. Do not allow customers or bystanders to adjust anchorage or equipment.

3.4 Rain, thunderstorms, heat and surface condition

Suspend or stop use where rain makes the entrance, mats, bounce surface or slide unsafe, where water could affect electrical equipment, during thunderstorms, or where heat creates unsafe surface temperatures or heat-related illness risk. Reassess after any significant weather change or break before users return. Open-sided shelters and marquees do not automatically remove wind risk.

3.5 Immediate stop triggers

Stop admission and clear users for: approaching/exceeded wind limits; loose or disturbed restraint; inflatable movement; abnormal pressure or shape; blower/tube problems; electrical damage or repeated tripping; damaged fabric/netting; blocked exits; displaced matting; slippery/wet surfaces; unsafe heat; loss of supervision; or any condition the supervisor cannot confidently control. Do not try to hold down a lifting inflatable or release anchors in high wind.

CONTROL RULE - monitoring must be workable

If the agreed person cannot take and record required readings, if instruments are missing/faulty, or if conditions are changing too quickly for the planned interval, stop use until a competent monitoring arrangement is restored. Increase checking frequency whenever conditions materially change.

4. Power loss, emergencies and restart

RESPONSIBLE: SUPERVISOR / ATTENDANT | RI OWNER FOR RESTART AUTHORISATION

4.1 Sudden power loss or collapse

Immediately stop entry and climbing. Direct and assist users by the unit-specific safe escape route, prioritising anyone trapped, distressed or at height. Do not tell users to jump over walls or climb unsupported structures. Keep bystanders back. Call 999 for trapping, serious injury or immediate danger and provide the exact access/location. Isolate an electrical hazard only if it is safe to do so. Follow RI-EP-001 and contact Rugby Inflatables.

4.2 Injury, illness or other emergency

Stop use and prevent further access. Provide first aid only within competence and seek emergency assistance where necessary. Do not move a seriously injured person unless needed to avoid a greater danger. Preserve relevant details after rescue and immediate safety needs are dealt with, including time, conditions, witnesses and equipment state, and report the incident to RI under the applicable incident procedure.

4.3 Defect, damage or repeated electrical trip

Do not permit customers to repair, patch, re-anchor, reposition or repeatedly reset a tripping electrical supply. If fabric, seams, netting, restraint, blower, cable or other safety-critical equipment is suspected defective, stop use and leave it isolated/undisturbed as far as practical until RI assesses it. Wet or damaged electrical equipment must not be re-energised.

4.4 Restart after a stop

A simple reinflation does not prove the cause has been resolved. Restart only after Rugby Inflatables has established and corrected the cause and authorised repeat safety checks. As applicable, recheck restraint, mats, blower/tube, cables, weather, internal pressure and the empty pre-use deflation test. Record the restart decision and any corrective action in the existing online record.

4.5 End of use / collection

Keep active supervision in place until the final user is off and admission has ended. Customers must not disconnect, deflate, move or release anchorage. Keep the unit and work area controlled until Rugby Inflatables begins collection. Tell the collection team about any fault, incident, unusual weather, contamination, trip or abnormal behaviour observed during the hire.

NO RESTART GATE

No restart where the cause is unknown, a defect remains, monitoring cannot be restored, weather remains unsafe, the supervisor cannot safely continue, or RI has not authorised return to service after a safety stop.

5. Roles, records and document control

RESPONSIBLE: RI OWNER / NAMED SUPERVISOR / RI ATTENDANT

5.1 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Minimum responsibility
Responsible hirer / nominated adult	Maintain active supervision after handover; control admission, user numbers, behaviour and safe grouping; carry out the monitoring allocated at handover; stop use when required; prevent interference with equipment; contact RI for defects, power loss or restart decisions.
Rugby Inflatables attendant	Actively supervise the assigned unit within the staffing/event plan; enforce unit rules; manage user flow; complete allocated monitoring; stop use and escalate equipment, weather, crowd or emergency concerns. Request additional cover where visibility or workload is inadequate.
Rugby Inflatables setup lead / operator	Release only a safe installation; provide unit-specific operating information and instrument instruction; confirm named supervision and monitoring arrangements; respond to reported faults/stops; authorise restart after safety-critical interruptions.
Rugby Inflatables owner	Maintain controlled procedures, competence/training arrangements, equipment records and incident review; determine quarantine, repair, reinspection and any statutory reporting requirements.

5.2 Existing records

Use the existing online handover/monitoring record for booking/site details, equipment IDs, named supervisor/relief, wind and pressure readings, stop/restart decisions, incidents and handover confirmation. This SOP does not add duplicate paper checklists. Records should be completed contemporaneously and retained under the existing document-control arrangements.

5.3 Related controlled documents

Read with RI-SOP-001 (Setup & Collection), RI-RA-001 (Bouncy Castle), RI-RA-002 (Bounce & Slide Combo), RI-EP-001 (Emergency Procedures), RI-GD-001 (Extreme Heat), RI-GD-002 (Wind & Adverse Weather), RI-HS-003 (Incident Reporting) and RI-EQ-004 (Equipment Quarantine/Defect Control), plus the actual unit manual and current inspection record. Where documents conflict, stop and obtain owner/competent advice before operation.

Technical sources and review watch - checked 01 October 2026

HSE, Bouncy castles and other play inflatables: safety advice (updated 10 June 2026): hse.gov.uk/entertainment/fairgrounds/inflatables.htm
HSE, Fairgrounds and amusement parks: Guidance on safe practice (HSG175, third edition): hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg175.htm
BSI catalogue: BS EN 14960-1:2019 - current / under review. The HSE web page still contains a reference to the superseded 2013 edition; BSI lists the 2019 Part 1 edition as current. Monitor HSE/BSI/PIPA/ADIPS changes and review early where requirements change.

Revision 2.3

Approved 03 October 2026. Corrects the earlier fleet-wide children-only wording introduced in v2.2. The individual inflatable manufacturer/user label and current inspection/registration information now control permitted user groups, user heights and capacities, including adult use where specifically allowed. User-separation wording has been generalised accordingly. All other v2.2 supervision, monitoring, stop/restart and emergency controls remain in force. This revision supersedes v2.2.