

RISK

**Spring/
Summer
2005**

Playing It Safe

Inflatable Amusement Rides, Mobile Rock Walls & Climbing Walls



**Michigan Municipal Risk
Management Authority
Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee**

PLAYING IT SAFE

INFLATABLE AMUSEMENT RIDES, MOBILE ROCK WALLS & CLIMBING WALLS

If you own, operate, or rent inflatables to private parties, closely follow the manufacturers' instructions and guidelines for operation and set up.

INTRODUCTION

Mobile inflatable rides and mobile climbing walls are customarily used at fairs, carnivals and festivals, but are also operated at private fairs and parties through rental agencies. Those who use mobile inflation rides and climbing walls vary in age from children to adults.

MOBILE INFLATABLE RIDES

The Consumer Products Safety Commission, investigating incidents over a three year period, was aware of 9 incidents which resulted in 21 injuries on large slide-type inflatable devices and 33 incidents which resulted in 33 injuries, with bounce-type inflatable devices.

A member of the MMRMA recently experienced an unfortunate incident with a Titanic ship-type slide inflatable ride where some children were injured. After investigating this



incident it was discovered that there have been several similar occurrences around the U.S. as well as other countries with this particular type of inflatable slide. This particular piece of inflatable slide ride does not come under any state of Michigan rules or regulations regarding rides.

The MMRMA Parks and Recreation Advisory



Committee and The Risk Control Department recommend that if you own, operate, or rent inflatables to private parties to closely follow the manufacturers' instructions and guidelines for operation and set up. Inspection procedures and guidelines for safe set up and operation of inflatable rides may vary from manufacturer to manufacturer.

In addition, the Consumer Products Safety Commission has developed some recommendations for inflatable rides:

- Minimum number of operators is TWO (2) on a large slide over 15 feet tall.
- Minimum number on an inflatable bounce or small slide, under 15 feet, is ONE (1).
- Maximum recommended weight per passenger is 200 lbs., or per manufacturer's recommendation.
- Do not exceed manufacturer's requirements for maximum loads for individual rides.
- Follow the owner/operators manual for site layout, inflation procedures, ropes, tethers, tie downs, anchors, use temperature range, maximum number of riders, size of riders, electrical codes, daily operation, daily inspection, washing, repair, deflation, drying, storage, and transportation.



MOBILE CLIMBING WALLS

According to industry estimates, there are thousands of varied sizes of mobile rock walls and climbing walls being used in the U.S. A tragic incident occurred in Columbia, MO on July 14, 2003. A 22-year old female died while climbing a mobile rock wall when the auto-belay cable attached to her harness broke. The victim fell to the concrete below. The cable had a rubber sheath over the cable but underneath the sheath the cable was frayed.

The Consumer Products Safety Commission recommends closely inspecting the climbing walls and all equipment in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and guidelines for operation, repair, maintenance, and set-up.

In addition:

- Examine auto-belay cables, especially near pulleys, for wear, broken wires, "fish hooks" (burrs or broken strands of wire cable), and deformation.
- Lift or slide the plastic or rubber sheath over the auto-belay cable on the harness end and examine for wear, corrosion, or broken wires, and replace cables if any are worn, or have broken wires or "fish hooks."

- Follow the owner/operator's manual on repair, maintenance and parts replacement.
- Inspect daily the auto-belay cables for "fish hooks," wear, or corrosion, and replace annually or after 10,000 documented cycles, or earlier if necessary.
- Examine carabiners, swivels and rings for proper functioning and locking, and replace those not functioning properly.
- Examine harness for wear and tearing and replace if necessary.
- The maximum weight per passenger is 250 lbs., or per manufacturer's recommendations.
- Make sure the required number of operators is present on climbing walls.
- Do not exceed manufacturer's requirements for maximum loads for individual walls.

CONCLUSION

This safety brochure is intended to inform MMRMA MEMBERS of the hazards involved with mobile inflatable rides and climbing walls and the potential for an incident to occur resulting in a claim for damages. Following the basic guidelines in this safety brochure will help to ensure success in your endeavors.

It is recognized that these guidelines cannot be, nor are they meant to be, all encompassing. Each community will have its own unique characteristics. Issues of personal safety, property protection, and liability risk avoidance may require additional consideration.

Questions relating to inflatable amusement rides and mobile rock walls and climbing walls can be directed to Consumer Products Safety Commission, Washington, DC.

For further assistance, contact the RISK CONTROL DEPARTMENT of MMRMA.

Closely inspect the climbing walls and all equipment in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and guidelines for operation, repair, maintenance, and set-up.



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**Michigan Municipal
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