

Bounce houses are a popular source of entertainment during festivals and other events. They provide hours of fun and healthy exercise for children, but they can also be dangerous.

The [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) (CPSC) reminds us that children have received cuts, sprains, broken bones, head injuries, and worse while playing in bounce houses.

If this happens, does your District have risk management procedures in place to minimize the District's liability?

This advisory provides guidance when citizens request to use bounce houses on District properties. It also applies to Districts who rent bounce houses for their own sponsored events.

Read on for valuable risk management tools regarding:

- Risk Transfer
- Special Event Permits
- Special Events Coverage
- Risk Management Best Practices

## ➤ RISK TRANSFER

Implementing the following risk transfer practices will assist in reducing the District's risk exposure:

- The bounce house company (BHC) should provide the District with a certificate of general liability insurance with limits of at least \$1 million.
- The District should be named as additional insureds on the BHC's commercial general liability policy.
- The contract between the permittee (the party requesting to use the bounce house on District-owned property) and BHC should include provisions to indemnify the District in the event of claims arising out of the use, set up, or dismantling of the bounce house.
- The BHC must have a current business license.
- The BHC must maintain responsibility for the proper set up of the bounce house.
- Consider the use of parental permission liability waiver for participants.

***Does your District own a bounce house?*** If the District owns a bounce house for their sponsored events, it is important to understand the District is taking on all the risk themselves and there is no risk transfer in place. A system must be in place to train designated employees on the manufacturer's operating procedures and have comprehensive inspection, maintenance, and documentation procedures in place.

## ▶ PERMIT PROCESS

Consider implementing a bounce house permit process and/or adding provisions to your special events permit process. In addition to the outlined best practices, requirements should include, but are not limited to:

- Assigning designated areas in parks to minimize hazards from adjacent exposures.
- Requiring compliance with the manufacturer’s operating procedures for the specified bounce house.
- Requiring the permittee to provide a copy of manufacturer’s operating procedures along with the permit application.
- Designating procedures for set-up/taken down time frames, such as between sunrise and sunset on the same day unless approved for multiple day event. (Lighting and security requirements should apply).



## ▶ SPECIAL EVENTS COVERAGE

Consider requiring the permittee to purchase special events coverage, or the District may consider purchasing special events coverage and require reimbursement of the coverage costs from the permittee.

## ▶ BEST PRACTICES

**Please note:** The following are considered general best practices; however, they do not override the manufacturer’s operating procedures:

- Power cords must be protected to reduce tripping hazards.
- Portable generators used to power a bounce house blower must have a ground fault interrupter.
- Adult supervision of the bounce house must be provided continuously from inflation to dismantling.
- Ensure the bounce house is staked to the ground with 18-inch stakes that are 3/8 inches in diameter. If additional stability is required, place additional weights on each corner.
- If strong winds or an approaching thunderstorm arise, immediately shut down and deflate the bounce house.
- Adult supervision is always required.
- Children should be similar in both age/size. Give each age group its own time.
- Do not allow children to sit down inside the bounce house while other children are bouncing.
- Parents/guardians should remove children’s shoes before using the bounce house.
- Regularly check for sharp or hard objects and remove from bounce house.
- No food or drinks in the bounce house.

