

# THE SAFE STEP

*Your connection to protecting those who improve your community*



## AQUATIC INFLATABLES

### The Problem

The use of water inflatables is increasing and with it comes potential for injuries and accidents.

Potential accidents could include concussions, broken bones, scratches and even potential drowning. Inflatable devices, like water trampolines, climbing walls, slides or even floating water parks come with their own manufacturer product guidelines depending upon the type of device, height, width and length of the inflatable. Devices not professionally installed in adequate water depth and using proper spacing have the potential to create further injuries.

### The Solution

There are several protocols to consider when purchasing and installing a water inflatable.

#### Suggested To DO

✓ Determine who will be your on-site expert at your organization such as the Aquatic Director, Facility Manager, and/or CEO and involve them in all phases of the process (research, purchasing, installation, and inspection). Your on-site expert should be present in all discussions and evaluations of the potential equipment.

✓ Ask for a copy of all safety materials from the manufacturer before purchasing; determining whether you have adequate room and spacing for the devices. Establish a water depth base line for all pieces of equipment. Safe storing conditions should also be determined.



## Suggested To DO



Identify potential blind spots for proper site lines when determining water placement of inflatables. If blind spots obstruct lifeguards from a full 360 degrees view, then zone validations should be reconfigured, so all sites are in view when equipment is in use and when not in use.



It is recommended that all persons using the water inflatable(s) wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD). If not clearly stated in the manufacturer's guidelines, check with the manufacturer and your organization's aquatic protocols. PFDs should be provided and fitted by the organization.



Inspect the water device(s) daily before use. Look for the following:

- a. Loose or missing anchors of each part of the device
- b. Entrapment hazards
- c. Deflated devices in the water

Open water presents different challenges than clear water and should be considered before the purchase of inflatables. Taking the time before you purchase a water inflatable device to address any potential safety concerns is the best way to be proactive in reducing potential injuries.

## Suggested To DO



Check water levels daily before use based on your base water depth standard. Water levels can change from excessive rainfall or a drought causing the device(s) to be in shallow or deep-water areas, potentially leading the device(s) to rotate out of position.



Always develop a rotation plan for lifeguards for protection of blind spots. This rotation plan should reflect different times of the day and season.



Implement a buddy system or other system that is consistent with the organization's open water policies for all areas of the waterfront.



Use of equipment should be age appropriate.

### Great American can Help!

Check out our all-new Risk Portal for information such as this and other resources that can help you manage your risks:  
<https://gaig-shs.riskresourcesportal.org/>