

February 2018

INFLATABLE SLIDES, ISLANDS, PLATFORMS, WATER BALLS

Requirements for operating water-borne inflatable devices

This technical bulletin is aimed at operators of water-borne inflatable¹ devices ('WBI') who offer free or paid rides to the public.

This bulletin is designed to help operators of WBIs understand their responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA). It also provides advice on what operators can do to fulfil their duties.

Primary duty of care

As a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU), you have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of your workers, and others (members of the public) who may be exposed to risk from the WBI operation. Risks that arise from your work must be eliminated so far as is reasonably practicable. If a risk can't be eliminated, it must be minimised.

Some of the steps you can take to manage the risks from WBIs are:

- making sure that your WBI and its operation comply with Australian Standard 3533.4.5 - 2017 Water-borne Inflatable Devices
- carrying out a risk assessment to identify site specific and any other risks



So far as is reasonably practicable

So far as is reasonably practicable means thinking about the ways that someone could be harmed (risks) and doing what is possible in your circumstances to ensure the safety of that person.

- making sure that anyone operating the WBI is competent
- making sure that manufacturer guidance on the design, installation and operation of the WBI is adhered to.

¹ WBIs are not currently defined as an amusement device in Regulations and are not required to be registered. However, by design and intent of use, they provide amusement for members of the public.

Some common risks

Some of the risks that you should consider in any risk assessment include:

- trapping
- drowning
- inappropriate patron behaviour
- insufficient water depth at device exits
- deflation while in use
- weak swimmers
- poor water quality
- insecure blower installation
- bad weather – wind
- water current
- trips, slips and falls.

This is not an exhaustive list and you should always carry out your own risk assessment to identify all risks and the control measures needed.

Have a safety system

WorkSafe expects any operator of WBIs to have a safety system that includes the manufacturer's requirements, activity controls and standard operating procedures.

Safe operating procedures may incorporate:

- emergency procedures
- evacuation procedures
- adequate supervision as defined in AS 3533.4.5 – 2017
- procedures for reporting and recording incidents or accidents
- making sure the electrical supply is through a residual current protection device(s) or isolating transformer(s). All electrical leads must be certified.
- controlling the rate of deflation
- regulating minimum and maximum inflation air pressure and having a means of monitoring this.

Activity Controls should be based on the *Rules of Use* found in AS 3533.4.5 – 2017. These include:

- ensuring that users don't swim under or become trapped under the WBI
- attracting patron attention
- preventing inappropriate activities by providing adequate supervision
- appropriate food and drink restrictions.

Operators of WBIs must be able to produce evidence to show how the inflatable device(s) meets the Standard. Any labels which indicate a device is compliant must be accompanied by supporting documentary evidence.

A WorkSafe Inspector may issue a prohibition notice if they believe the operation of the device or the device itself is unsafe (likely to cause serious harm). This may prohibit the use of the WBI until it is proven to be safe.

Responsibilities of event organisers

Event Organisers (upstream duty holders) have a duty of care under the HSWA to ensure that worker's health and safety is not at risk from their activity.

We recommend that event organisers do not use any WBI operator that is unable to clearly demonstrate that they meet the requirements of Australian Standard 3533.4.1 – 2017.

Note: You can't contract out of your duties under HSWA. Any waivers that are an attempt to contract out of your duties to workers or members of the public are not effective in the case of a breach.

When will it take effect?

The requirements outlined in this bulletin will take effect immediately from the date of issue.

Resources

The standard is available to purchase: <https://infostore.saiglobal.com/en-au/Standards/AS-3533-4-5-2017-1898679>

Bulletin on risks of using water balls: www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/injury-prevention-safety/alerts/whsq/2010/inflatable-water-balls