

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

NOTICE OF USE OF NON-PERMITTED INFLATABLE AMUSEMENT RIDES AND INSURANCE LIABILITIES FOR NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS, TOWNSHIPS & SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Amusement Ride Safety Inspections Unit (Unit), under the Bureau of State & Local Code Inspections, has received several recent complaints from registered inflatable ride owners who are losing many of their commercial contracts to owners illegally operating within the State without the required ride permits, as per NJAC 5:14A. The operation of inflatables inherently involves a risk to the public and it is crucial that these rides be properly set up and operated by qualified persons. The Unit ensures that these rides are safe through a permitting and annual inspection process.

Registered and permitted ride owners are required to renew their ride permits and to be inspected annually. During this annual inspection, owners are required to demonstrate to the Department their ability to correctly set up and operate the equipment in accordance with the ride manufacturer's requirements and specifications. They are also required to provide training certification for all ride operators. Non-permitted, illegal operators may not be adhering to these requirements, thus making for potentially improper and dangerous equipment set up. In fact, an incident recently occurred in Maryland involving a young child who lost their life due to improper set up and assembly, allowing the inflatable ride to blow away while children were occupying the inflatable.

While many unpermitted inflatable rides are rented illegally at private residences (for birthday and graduation parties, for example), many continue to be contracted for use at events sponsored by schools, daycare centers, churches, and town events. The Department would like to point out that any inflatable being advertised, contracted, and/or operating for public use requires a current and valid annual ride permit issued by the DCA, whether it be for a public or private event. The Department is asking for reciprocal assistance via our many municipalities to prevent the continued advertising, contracting, and use of illegal non-permitted rides at public events. Our local partners would include Uniform Construction Code and fire safety officials, school boards, and parent organizations, and the public at large.

The Department would also like to emphasize that **use of unregistered and unpermitted inflatable rides in New Jersey could present issues with insurance coverage and may result in a homeowner, ride owner, and/or municipality exposed to liability, as the equipment would be deemed to have been operated illegally.**

In addition to a current and valid annual ride permit, an annual inspection is also required, resulting in the DCA safety inspector affixing a "passed inspection" green sticker to the ride at the time of inspection. We are asking all municipal and school district personnel to be aware of, and to look for the required **"Passed Inspection Permit to Operate" green sticker** on any inflatable ride(s) you may encounter operating at public events in your town/municipality, and if not found, to call the ride hotline at 609-292-2099, or contact us at rides@dca.nj.gov so we may respond accordingly.

Together, we can best serve our state and its residents by working cooperatively to ensure public safety while offering assistance to current ride owners who are permitted and operating legally.