

EN14960:2013 – Guidance on Risk Assessment

Our standard, EN 14960:2013, is the standard to which all inflatables intended for bouncing and/or sliding should be built, maintained and operated. As RPII Annual Inspectors, it is our responsibility to ensure that this is so.

However, there are times when we find minor infringements of the standard on both new and older inflatables and need to decide if we should pass or fail. To help us make this decision we can use, **as a last option**, our Risk Assessment method, our experience and information from the owner or operator. For instance, what if a step tread depth (std) turns out to be, say, 3cm short? Is that going to increase the risk of injury to users? Probably not, but what about 10cm or 15cm? In my experience, it depends upon the proportion of the shortage. On a step with 1.5m std, 15cm could possibly be safe to allow but would certainly not be safe on a step with a 1.0m std. Much also depends upon the size of user. A 1.8m user takes larger paces than a 1.2m user so this must be taken into account. In order to pass a std shortage, it may be necessary to reduce the maximum height of user.

It is important that if you decide to pass a non-complying item following your risk assessment you must make a note of your thinking at the time. In the event of a subsequent accident, you could be asked to explain yourself.

When inspecting repaired or modified inflatables, we must be extra vigilant as some of that type of work is not always carried out by people who know the standard and apply it. There have been examples of repairs and modifications taking the inflatable further away from compliance with the standard than the original failure. If you fail an inflatable and your client intends to have it modified or repaired, be sure to make it clear exactly what it fails on and what should be done to ensure compliance on re-test.

There are some items on our inspection sheet on which we should not compromise because of the severity of injury which a fail might cause:

Anything to do with anchorage

Blower distance

Flame retardancy of fabrics on, around and above the user area

Sharp angles and edges contactable by the user

Entrapment between 2 adjacent inflated surfaces

Deflation/evacuation time

Markings

All 6 items regarding Totally Enclosed Structures

All 4 items regarding Slides

Always remember – if you pass anything which does not fully comply with the standard, the responsibility is squarely upon your shoulders.