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SAFETY ALERT: GOVERNOR CUOMO URGES CAUTION WHEN USING LARGE INFLATABLE TOY HOUSES

State Safety Experts Outline Steps to Keep Kids Safe Following Serious Accident in South Glens Falls

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today urged parents to follow safety precautions to ensure their children are safe when using large inflatable toy houses.

“As a parent, I know firsthand the importance of protecting our children,” Governor Cuomo said. “As this week’s tragic incident in the Capital District demonstrates, inflatable toy houses can become dangerous when not secured properly. I urge all parents to exercise caution when installing these devices, carefully follow the instructions and keep kids off them on windy days. My thoughts and prayers are with the family in South Glens Falls and we wish their children a full and speedy recovery.”

Department of Labor safety inspectors are charged with inspecting amusement park rides, which may include large inflatable toy houses or rides. Although they do not inspect privately owned ‘bouncy houses,’ as the toys are commonly referred to, inspectors say similar hazards exist with smaller private models.

State safety experts strongly recommend parents and guardians exercise the following precautions in order to minimize injury associated with large inflatable devices:

- Inflatables should not be used when wind gusts exceed the manufacturer’s recommendations (refer to owner’s manual).
- Devices should be set up away from power lines and fences.
- Users must remove their shoes and any loose or sharp objects.
- Users should be grouped together by size to ensure only those of a similar size are allowed in at the same time.
- Do not exceed the capacity outlined in the owner’s manual.
- The inflatable device should be anchored to the ground according to the manufacturer’s instructions. This typically involves stakes corkscrewed or driven into the ground or the use of sandbags. Any ropes should be attached to minimize tripping, especially near entrances and exits.
- Ensure blowers are securely fastened and that outlets have proper voltage.
- Exterior landing surfaces should be covered in a soft material such as a gym mat or other thick foam material and extend at least four feet from the opening.

“The tragic events in South Glens Falls illustrate how easily kids can be hurt using these inflatable houses,” said State Labor Commissioner Peter M. Rivera. “It’s vital that parents and guardians take the extra time to read through all included safety booklets and call manufactures if they have questions or suspect there are problems.”

Inflatable rides should be inspected as instructed by the manufacturer and at least before each use. Parents should ensure that:

- There are no rips and tears in the seams or fabric.
- Blower tubes are in good condition.
- Anchors remain properly secured.
- There are no exposed wires.
- The ride remains properly inflated during use.