



Breaking SAFETY NEWS

**SUMO ACCIDENT-- JURY BLAMES MFG & OWNER
AWARDS PLAINTIFF \$2 MILLION-- FAR EXCEEDS TYPICAL LIABILITY
POLICY LIMIT. FOR MORE INFO READ BELOW.**

**For Additional
News Coverage
Of This
Incident**

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**Accidents Are A
Part Of Life.**

One issue that effects the inflatable industry probably more than most amusements is the perception that the cushion of air makes the equipment "harmless."

A belief like this can create a false sense of security. Inflatable businesses and their patrons are always safer when risks are recognized and respected.

We trust that our coverage of this incident and other inflatable news will overcome any preventable mistake, misuse or misconception that might cause future

Inside the Sumo "Suit"--

The Accident & The AfterMATH

Last week a Denver, CO. jury awarded \$2 million dollars to a woman who suffered permanent brain damage after a bout of inflatable sumo wrestling at a company event in 2005.



The Accident

Katherine Giles was participating in a corporate team building exercise when she fractured her skull after her head hit the surface. Her injuries were blamed on several key factors:

- **The headgear, although on, was loose and slipped up upon impact**
- **The opponents were ill-matched for size/weight**
- **The match started before both players were fully prepared**
- **The landing surface was not sufficiently padded**

It is important to remember that even when these specific safety hazards are properly addressed, sumo suits carry a danger that the public does not foresee.

Recommendations:

We continue to discourage the use of sumo suits by our members. **We ask all who do use them to make sure the events are attended and supervised by knowledgeable and trained staff. It is also extremely important to have participants sign statements acknowledging the risks and waiving any claims for liability against you. Large Warning Signs should also be posted so all participants must see them before they are suited.**

In addition, extra padding should be used beyond the combat zone, as most injuries are the result of striking a hard surface off the mat. Making sure head gear fits properly must be part of the criteria deciding who can participate. **Preventing any physical contact until you determine that both participants are properly suited is also an important step in setup.**



The AfterMATH \$\$\$+\$+

This case has been active for nearly four years, creating pain and expense for everyone involved. Even the parties that were ultimately not found liable faced high dollar court costs! One source noted that **"a good hold harmless agreement written by experienced attorneys could protect you from both defense costs as well as any jury award."** As you can see the award in this case is larger than the policy limits carried by most companies. **Any award in excess of policy limits is an uninsured loss,** for which you would be responsible. Contact your agent to make sure you have the policy limits you need to protect your company.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated event. We feel we owe it to our industry and the public to increase awareness of the hidden dangers in operating sumo suits without the strictest safety protocols.

6 Crucial Steps To Prepare Operators, Customers & Participants for Serious Sumo Suit Risks

- Insist upon an experienced attendant
- If you do not send your own attendant; your customer must get sufficient documentation and advice from you to operate

the event safely. This instruction must be acknowledged in writing.

- Warnings that specify the rules of the event must be posted.
- Use a signup sheet that serves as an acknowledgement of rules and hazards.
- Issue documentation that clearly states that misuse of this inflatable can result in serious injury and even death.
- Demand or Use a contract that demands that the operator will close the attraction at the first sign of misuse.

For More Inflatable Industry News, Go To
www.insuremybounce.com

This announcement for IIPG members is for information only; you should consult your attorney for actual legal advice.