

Proper inflation is the key to fun when it comes to inflatable towable water toys. Because none of us enjoy dealing with upset customers, Sportsstuff provides this Inflation Guide to help you educate the consumer. Sportsstuff believes improper inflation is the biggest cause of problems with inflatable towable tubes, and hopes you will help promote proper inflation.

Under-inflation causes the tow tube to sit low in the water. Additional stress is applied to the tube, cover, rope and boat, by being dragged through the water instead of pulled across it. This stress causes the tube to be stretched out of shape displacing the air and the tube may rupture. This same stress causes nylon covers to tear and ropes to stretch.

How much air is the right amount? In general, the tube is full when it is very firm. Covered tubes should be wrinkle free. An adult should be able to stand on the tube and only sink a couple of inches. In order to achieve this level of inflation, the PVC must stretch, which is why the choice of inflators is so important. Just as under-inflation is a problem, over-inflation will cause excessive stress on seams. Advise your customers to pay close attention and stop inflating as soon as the tube is firm and cover is smooth.

Towable tubes need to be full of air and properly maintained for long product life and ultimate performance.

Pumps and Valves: Please turn to page 43 for information about pumps and inflators available from Sportsstuff. In addition to pumps, shop vacs and leaf blowers also work very well. Information about the different types of valves used can be found on page 5.

Most towable tubes can be inflated using one good electric pump or a combination of 12 volt and hand pumps. Some of the newer 12-volt inflators have been designed specifically to inflate beds or tubes, but will still not fully inflate some of the bigger tubes now on the market (Most 12-volt compressors, while doing an excellent job of filling a bicycle or car tire, do not have the volume capacity to inflate many towables). If toys are being filled at the lake, some of the bigger tubes on the market require a hand pump in addition to the 12-volt inflator that plugs into your boat's cigarette lighter. The inflator will do most of the hard work, and the hand pump can be used to top off the tube and maintain proper inflation levels.

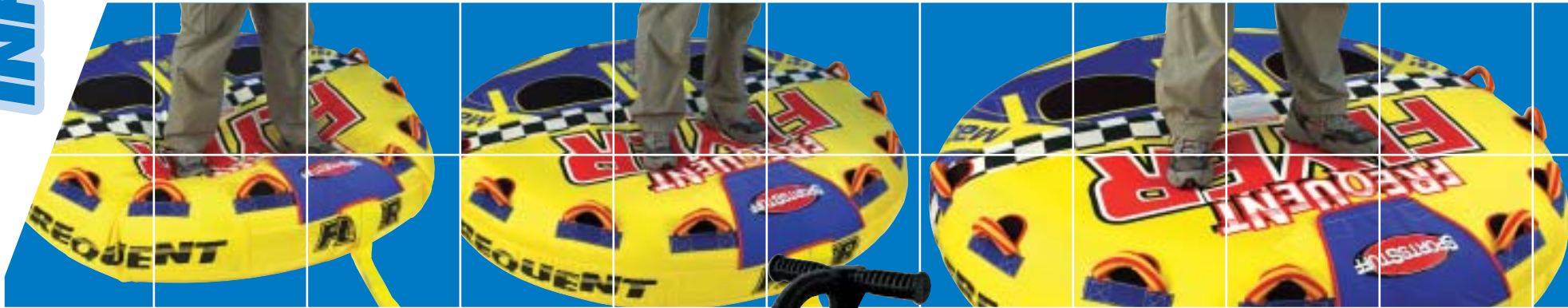
Maintenance: Finally, it is not enough to simply fill it up and go! If a full tube is left sitting in the sun for any length of time, it will expand. Either store it in the shade, or let some air out. Don't let it sit on the beach, dock, or boat full of air! At the same time, if it is stored out of the sun in a cool place, it may need air added. Check and adjust inflation levels before each use. Your customers will have more fun, you will sell more tubes, and our warranty claims will go down, helping us all.



UNDERINFLATED



PROPERLY INFLATED



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PROPERLY INFLATED

These pictures show severely underinflated tubes. Note how an adult sinks in when standing on the tube. This tube would tend to plow through the water. The tubes would not last and the customer would be unhappy. This would not be good for you or Sportsstuff. Help us educate the consumer!

This photo shows a properly inflated tube. Note how the cover is taut with few wrinkles, and how an adult barely sinks when standing on the tube. This tube would ride high on the water, providing your customer with an exciting, great ride. Fewer problems, more sales!

