Aquatics Play Structures
Operational Practices and Procedures Guidance
Rockers

The Operational Practices and Procedures Guidance should be applied in conjunction with the BSA's Aquatics Play Structure Policy that can be found in the Aquatics Safety section of the Guide to Safe Scouting.

1. **Description**
   A variety of sealed inflatable rockers are available, from small devices for two children to those that will accommodate eight adults. The devices are generally used as standalone play structures in a see-saw mode, but some can be incorporated in water obstacle courses.

2. **Typical risks of the Activity**
   a. Injuries to persons in the water struck by the rocking action
   b. Injuries from a participant catapulted into the air or onto other participants
   c. Those falling into the water or climbing on the device hidden from view of poorly positioned lifeguards
   d. Electrical shock if electrical air pumps are used for inflation
   e. Injury or drowning from unauthorized or poorly supervised use

3. **Safety considerations during installation**
   a. <u>Water Depth</u> – safe water depth depends on the size of the rocker. Follow manufacturer's recommendation and/or test during setup to ensure that those falling from the device do not contact the bottom.
   b. <u>Distance from other objects</u> – Clearance around the device needs to be such that a person falling or thrown from the device will not strike any other float or fixture, including boundary markers.
   c. <u>Anchor Lines</u> – anchor lines should be vertical or angled underneath the float such that they do not pose hazards for participants falling from the device.

4. **Safety Check Items**
   Prior to each activity session, check at least the following and discontinue use if necessary until repairs are made:
   a. Inflation/leaks
   b. Integrity of handholds
   c. Anchor fastenings

5. **Safety considerations in conducting the Activity**
   a. All participants should pass the BSA swimmer classification
   b. All participants should wear properly fitted approved lifejackets. Those designed and reinforced for PWC, water skiing, or other impact activities are recommended.

c. Rules and procedures are explained to participants prior to the activity.
d. Buddies use the device together
e. The number and location of buddy pairs using the device is set appropriately for the device
f. Rules for accessing and leaving the device are established; that is, flow of participants is controlled and adequate communication signals are devised. Movement between devices may be coordinated with buddy checks.
g. For see-saw use, all participants should firmly grasp available handholds prior to rocking and should not change position during the activity. In particular, participants should not climb over the center divider on a W shaped device since sudden weight redistribution can catapult participants into the air.
h. If a W shaped device is used as part of a water obstacle course such that participants climb up on one side, then cross the center divider to exit from the other side, only a single buddy pair should be allowed on the device at once to avoid the catapult action noted in the item above
i. Note that the above list is for guidance and will need adaptation to local situations.

6. Emergency Action Plan Considerations

a. Adequate communication to stop rocking motion and direct participants during an emergency
b. Spinal injury management with the subject wearing a lifejacket
c. Cutting electrical power during inflation if electrical pumps are used

7. Prohibited Practices

a. Dismounting headfirst
b. Pushing another person off the device
c. Swimming underneath the device
d. Trying to knock others off the device by pulling or pushing on the sides or anchor lines from the water
e. Exceptions to the rules for staff-only use