

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 air in tubes to be displaced and the tube may rupture. This same stress causes nylon covers to tear and ropes to stretch. The boat cannot plane off and extra gas is consumed.

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. It has to have enough volume to stretch the PVC. Again, very firm, wrinkle free, and you'll be riding high and having the time of your life!

Towable tubes need to be full of air and properly maintained for long product life and ultimate performance. In order to properly inflate and maintain tubes, you must have the proper equipment.

Pumps: First, it is important to know that tubes do not require high pressure; they are low pressure / high volume products. If you could measure the pressure in a fully inflated tube, it would be around 2 PSI.

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 you are filling your toys 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.



Another suggestion is a Power Inverter. They have become much less expensive, and are an excellent way to power 220-volt appliances on or near the water. For tubers that live on the lake, or have access to 220-volt power, a good 220-volt inflator is a must have! Other 220-volt options are shop vacs with a blower option and leaf blowers, which put out large volumes of air.



Valve: Most Sportsstuff towables use what is called a Speed Safety Valve for inflation and deflation.



The opening on a Speed Safety Valve is about the size of a nickel, and uses a simple one-way valve to keep air from escaping. Simply insert the nozzle of the inflator into the opening on the valve and inflate.



Maintenance: Finally, it is not enough to simply fill it up and go! If you leave a full tube 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, you may need to add air. Check and adjust inflation levels each time you use your tube. You'll have more fun, and your toys will last longer.