
V N E W S O F V A L U E

WINDOW SAFETY

Avoid Falls Out Of Windows

Each year, approximately 18 children ages 10 and under die from window fall-related injuries. An estimated 4,700 children 14 and under are treated in hospital emergency departments annually for injuries sustained from falling out of windows. Head injuries account for the majority of these injuries. Children are more likely to die or be severely injured from window-related falls than falls associated with any other product. A child who lives in a multifamily building is five times more likely to fall than a youngster who lives in a private house. Clearly, ensuring a safe home should be a priority for community association residents. To safeguard youngsters, follow these tips:

- Consider installing window guards on windows located on the ground floor and up, unless designated as emergency fire exits. Each guard should have a quick-release mechanism for use in case of fire. Guards cost approximately \$8 to \$27, depending on a window's size, and can be found at large chain stores such as Home Depot.
- Move chairs and furniture away from windows.
- Don't rely on a screen to prevent falls; it is not designed to and it can't support a child's weight.
- Keep unopened windows locked.
- Don't open a window more than five inches. A child 10 or under can squeeze through a larger opening.

Window Cord Safety

A recent study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* estimates that nearly one child is strangling in window cords every two weeks. Almost all of these deaths (93 percent) are children three years old and under. Strangulation deaths from window cords happen most often when children are in places their parents think are safe: in a crib or bedroom. The study also points out that the deaths are silent—the children can't call out for help. In 85 percent of the documented cases, parents were home at the time of the incident. According to the study, children strangle in these cords two ways. Infants in cribs near windows get tangled in the looped cords while sleeping or playing; and toddlers, trying to look out a window, climb on furniture, lose their footing, and get caught in the window cords. Avoid a tragedy by following these tips on window cord safety:

- **Horizontal blinds:** Cut the cord loop to form two strands, remove the equalizer buckle, and place a safety tassel at the end of each strand. Wrap them around a cleat that's mounted high on the wall.
- **Accordion-style shades:** Cut the looped cord above the tassel, leaving the cord stop in place. Tie a separate tassel onto each cord end and secure them out of kids' reach.
- **Vertical blinds and drapes** have continuous-loop systems and need looped cords in order to operate correctly. To make them safer, install a cord tie-down device to the floor, wall, or window jamb that pulls the cords taut and reduces the chance of entrapment.
- Consumers can get safety tassels and tie downs by calling the Window Covering Safety Council toll free at 1-800-506-4636.
- When you install window coverings, adjust the cords to their shortest length possible. When you order new custom window coverings, specify that you want a short cord.

Questions Or Concerns? If you need some answers, please call Steve Dickerson at Morgan & Cheves, Inc. (703-739-2346).

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