



CPSC Safety Alert

Are Your Window Coverings Safe?

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has identified window coverings with cords as one of the top five hidden hazards in the home. To prevent tragic child strangulations, CPSC recommends the use of cordless window coverings in all homes where children live or visit.

About once a month a child between 7 months and 10 years old dies from window cord strangulation and another child suffers a near strangulation. In recent years, CPSC has recalled over five million window coverings, including Roman shades, roller and roll-up blinds, vertical and horizontal blinds.

Strangulation deaths and injuries can occur anywhere in the house where a window covering with a cord is installed. Children can wrap window covering cords around their necks or can pull cords that are not clearly visible but are accessible and become entangled in the loops. These incidents happen quickly and silently.

Window covering cords present the following four deadly hazards:

1

Pull Cords:

Children can strangle when they wrap the cord around their necks or become trapped in the loop created when loose cords get entangled. Even if cleats are used to wrap excess pull cords, if installed within the child's reach, the cords above the cleat present a hazard.



2

Looped Bead Chains or Nylon Cords:

Children can strangle in the free-standing loops.





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3 Inner Cords of Roman Shades

- Children can pull out an exposed inner cord on the back side of Roman shades, wrap it around their necks and strangle.
- Children can place their necks in the opening between the fabric and cord and strangle.



4 Lifting Loops of Roll-up Blinds

- If the lifting loops (that raise and lower the blinds) slide off the side of the blind, they form a free-standing loop in which a child can become entangled and strangle.
- Children can place their necks between the lifting loop and the roll-up blind material and strangle.



CPSC offers the following safety tips to prevent deaths and injuries associated with window covering cords:

- Examine all shades and blinds in the home. CPSC recommends the use of cordless window coverings in all homes where children live or visit. Make sure there are no accessible cords on the front, side, or back of the product.
- Do not place cribs, beds, and furniture close to the windows because children can climb on them and gain access to the cords.
- Make loose cords inaccessible.
- If the window shade has looped bead chains or nylon cords, install tension devices to keep the cord taut.

Note: Most window blinds sold prior to November 2000 have inner cords (for raising the slats of the blinds) that can be pulled by a child and form a loop in which the child's neck can entangle. Consumers should immediately repair these types of blinds. For a free repair kit, call the Window Covering Safety Council at 800-506-4636 or visit windowcoverings.org. Consumers should know that WCSC's retrofit kits do not address the dangling pull cord hazard associated with many common window blinds.

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