

The home can harbour many dangers for children but not many people realise that window blind and curtain cords can be dangerous or even fatal for babies and young children – particularly for those under the age of 3.

Children can injure, or even strangle themselves on window blind and curtain cords.

When exploring or playing a child can become entangled in hanging cords. If the child then tries to sit or falls down, they can hang themselves in the loop. The cord or chain loop used to open and close vertical blinds can also strangle children.

There have been a number of such incidents publicised worldwide. So how do you avoid such dangers.

There are several simple steps you can take to minimise this risk – and help keep your child safe.



Existing curtains and blinds

You can retro-fit your old blinds to make them safe in your home by following these steps:

- Cords ending in a loop are particularly risky. Cut the cord to get rid of the loop and install tassels.
- Cords should end at least 1.6 metres above the ground so children cannot reach them. Replace cords with curtain or blind wands.
- Where cords cannot be cut a tie down or tension device can be used to pull the cord tight and secure it to the floor or wall.
- Never put a cot, bed, high chair or playpen near a window or patio door where a child can reach a curtain or blind cord.
- Keep sofas, chairs, tables, shelves or bookcases away from windows to prevent children climbing up and reaching curtain or blind cords.

New Blinds and Curtains

From February 2009 the Irish Standard I.S. EN 13120 'Internal blinds -Performance requirements including safety' has been amended.

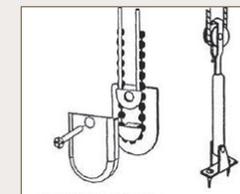
- Ask your supplier when buying blinds if the blind has been manufactured in accordance with the standard.
- A warning notice should be on the blind.
- A device for keeping cords, chains, tape or similar out of the reach of children should be provided with the blind or the product should be designed in such a way as to achieve the same result. Ask the supplier for a demonstration on the product's safe use.
- Parents/Guardians should follow the precautions mentioned above for existing blinds and always ensure that cords are out of the reach of children and be aware that children can climb onto furniture and play with blind and curtain cords.

Making your curtains and blinds safe is cheap and easy.

Vertical Blinds

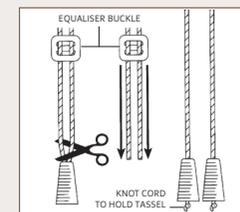
A special tie-down device can be used for vertical blinds with continuous loop cords.

TIE DOWN DEVICES FOR VERTICAL BLINDS, CONTINUOUS LOOP SYSTEMS AND DRAPERY CORDS ▶



Note

Knotting or tying the cords together after cutting the loop is NOT recommended as this creates a new loop in which a child could become entangled.



*YOU WILL NEED TO ENSURE THAT THE BLIND WILL CONTINUE TO BE OPERATIONAL IF ADJUSTED.

Inner Cords

Inner cords on horizontal blinds can form a loop that can hang infants and toddlers. Most modern blinds have attachments or inter-looping stitched cords so that inner cords can't form a loop if pulled by a young child. You can check your blinds by gently pulling on the inner cords of the blind to see how much slack is created or what sized loop is formed. If you are concerned you should contact your manufacturer or supplier.

The above are illustrations of the type of safety devices that may be available -seek advice from your local blinds/curtain shop or hardware store.

Note that complete elimination of the strangulation risk can only be achieved by keeping cords, chains, tapes and similar out of the reach of children. Use of additional safety devices may reduce the risk of strangulation but cannot be considered fool proof. Motorisation eliminates the risk associated with looped and pull-cord operating mechanisms but the risk relating to inner tapes and cords (for relevant products) remains. Persons in charge of children are ultimately responsible for following the safety instructions provided by the manufacturer.

The information provided here is intended as a guide only; you should contact your window treatment supplier with any queries regarding the safety of your blinds.