



APR 22 2013

Dear Department of Defense Housing Partners:

Every month nearly one child dies and another one is injured from window coverings cords, and some of these victims are in military families. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has designated window coverings with exposed cords to be one of the top five hidden hazards in homes with young children. Strangulation deaths and near strangulations can occur anywhere a window covering has a cord. Children can wrap the cords around their necks or become entangled in the loops of tangled cords. These tragic incidents happen quickly and silently—and they are preventable.

At the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Department of Defense, we care deeply about the safety of children in military homes. We are sure you do as well. The risk to military families is significant because a large percentage of families have children less than six years of age (37.4 per cent)—the same age that most strangulation deaths occur. In addition, because military parents are deployed months at a time, supervision becomes more challenging.

To minimize the risk associated with corded window coverings, the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Department of Defense strongly encourage you to replace old window coverings with cordless options or window coverings with inaccessible cords, as well as take time to educate your residents about the risk of strangulation with exposed cords. To help further educate your residents, attached are: a window covering safety alert, a child proofing checklist, and a listing of seven hidden hazards in the home. We suggest that you conspicuously display the safety alert for at least 120 days and distribute the child proofing and hidden hazards checklists to all of your residents.

In the past, many consumers have obtained free retrofit kits from the Window Covering Safety Council (WCSC) for blinds made before November 2000. However, you should be aware that these retrofit kits do not address the dangling pull cord hazard associated with many common window blinds.

Thank you for joining with us in the prevention of child strangulation by window covering cords.

Inez Tenenbaum  
Chairman  
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

John C. Conger  
Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense  
(Installations and Environment)



# 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.





# CPSC Safety Alert

## 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](http://windowcoverings.org). Consumers should know that WCSC's retrofit kits do not address the dangling pull cord hazard associated with many common window blinds.

5009-0413

# Childproofing Your Home

12 SAFETY DEVICES TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN



THIS BROCHURE BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



## U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

4330 East West Highway, Bethesda, MD 20814  
Web site: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)  
Toll-free hotline: 1-800-638-2772

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is a federal agency that helps keep families and children safe in and around their homes.

Go to [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) to check for recalled products and sign up for automatic e-mail recall notifications.

# Childproofing Your Home

12 SAFETY DEVICES TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN

Each year, children are injured by hazards in and around the home. The good news is that the risk of injury can be reduced or prevented by using child-safety devices and reminding older children in the house to re-secure safety devices after disabling them.

Most of these safety devices are easy to find and are relatively inexpensive. You can buy them at hardware stores, baby equipment shops, supermarkets, drug stores, home improvement stores, on the Internet and through mail order catalogs. Safety devices should be sturdy enough to hinder access and yet easy for you to use.

To be effective, they must be properly installed. Follow installation instructions carefully. Remember, too, that no device is completely childproof; determined youngsters have been known to overcome or disable them.

Here are some child safety devices that can help reduce injuries to young children. The red numbers correspond to those on the image following the text.

Use **Safety Latches and Locks** **1** for cabinets and drawers in kitchens, bathrooms, and other areas to help prevent poisonings and other injuries. Safety latches and locks on cabinets and drawers can help prevent children from gaining access to medicines, household cleaners, matches, or cigarette lighters, as well as knives and other sharp objects.

Even products with child-resistant packaging should be locked away and kept out of reach. This packaging is not childproof. Look for safety latches and locks that adults can easily install and use, but are sturdy enough to withstand pulls and tugs from children.



Use **Safety Gates** **2** to help prevent falls down stairs and to keep children from entering rooms and other areas with possible dangers.

Look for safety gates that children cannot dislodge easily, but that adults can open and close without difficulty. For the top of stairs, only use gates that screw to the wall.

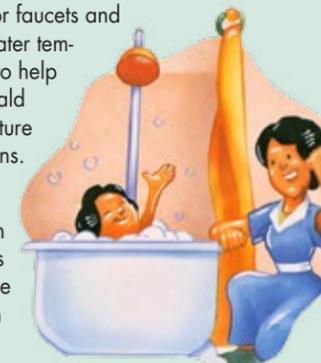
Use safety gates that meet current safety standards. Replace older safety gates that have "V" shapes that are large enough to entrap a child's head and neck.

Use **Door Knob Covers and Door Locks** **3** to help prevent children from entering rooms and other areas with possible dangers. Door knob covers and door locks can help keep children away from places with hazards.

Be sure the door knob cover is sturdy, and allows a door to be opened quickly by an adult in case of emergency.

Use **Anti-Scald Devices** **4** for faucets and shower heads and set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent burns from hot water. Anti-scald devices for regulating water temperature can help reduce the likelihood of burns.

Use **Smoke Alarms** **5** on every level of your home, inside each bedroom, and outside sleeping areas to alert you to fires. Smoke alarms are essential safety devices for protection against fire deaths and injuries.



Check smoke alarms once a month to make sure they're working. Change batteries at least once a year or consider using 10-year batteries for alarms.

Use **Window Guards and Safety Netting** **6** to help prevent falls from windows, balconies, decks, and landings.

Check these safety devices frequently to make sure they are secure and properly installed and maintained. Limit window openings to four inches or less, including the space between the window guard bars. If you have window guards, be sure at least one window in each room can be easily used for escape in a fire. Window screens are not effective for preventing children from falling out of windows.



Use **Corner and Edge Bumpers** **7** to help prevent injuries from falls against sharp edges of furniture and fireplaces. Be sure to look for bumpers that stay securely on furniture or hearth edges.

Use **Outlet Covers and Outlet Plates** **8** to help prevent electrocution. Outlet covers and outlet plates can help protect children from electrical shock and possible electrocution.

Be sure outlet protectors cannot be easily removed by children and are large enough so that children cannot choke on them. If you are replacing receptacles, use a tamper-resistant type.

Use a **Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarm** **9** to help prevent CO poisoning. All consumers should install CO alarms near sleeping areas in their homes. Change batteries at least once a year.

CPSC recommends using **Cordless Window Coverings** **10** in homes with young children, in order to help prevent strangulation. 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. If you have window blinds from 2000 or earlier and you cannot afford new, cordless window coverings, call the Window Covering Safety Council at 800-506-4636 or visit [WindowCoverings.org](http://WindowCoverings.org) for a free repair kit. Window blinds that have an inner cord (for raising the slats of the blinds) can be pulled by a child and form a potentially deadly loop. Consumers should immediately repair these types of blinds. Consumers should know that WCSC's retrofit kits do not address the dangling pull cord hazard associated with many common window blinds.

Use **Anchors to Avoid Furniture and Appliance Tip-Overs** **11**. Furniture, TVs and ranges can tip over and crush young children. Deaths and injuries occur when children climb onto, fall against or pull themselves up on television stands, shelves, bookcases, dressers, desks, chests and ranges. For added security, anchor these products to the floor or attach them to a wall. Free standing ranges and stoves should be installed with anti-tip brackets.

Use **Layers of Protection with Pools and Spas** **12**. A barrier completely surrounding the pool or spa including a 4-foot tall fence with self-closing, self-latching gates is essential. If the house serves as a side of the barrier, doors heading to the pool should have an alarm or the pool should have a power safety cover. Pool alarms can serve as an additional layer of protection.

Sliding glass doors, with locks that must be re-secured after each use, are not an effective barrier to pools.

# Childproofing Your Home

## 12 SAFETY DEVICES TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN

Child safety devices are an important aid to parental supervision. Here are 12 child safety devices that will help keep your home—and children—safer.

Use **SAFETY LATCHES and LOCKS 1** for cabinets and drawers in kitchens, bathrooms, and other areas to help prevent poisonings and other injuries.

Use **SAFETY GATES 2** to help prevent falls down stairs and to keep children from entering rooms and other areas with possible dangers.

Use **DOOR KNOB COVERS and DOORS LOCKS 3** to help prevent children from entering rooms and other areas with possible dangers.

Use **ANTI-SCALD DEVICES FOR FAUCETS and SHOWER HEADS 4** and set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent burns from hot water.

Use **SMOKE ALARMS 5** on every level of your home, inside each bedroom and outside sleeping areas to alert you to fires.

Use **WINDOW GUARDS and SAFETY NETTING 6** to help prevent falls from windows, balconies, decks, and landings.

Use **CORNER and EDGE BUMPERS 7** to help prevent injuries from falls against sharp edges of furniture and fireplaces.

Use **OUTLET COVERS and OUTLET PLATES 8** to help prevent electrocution.

Use a **CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) ALARM 9** near sleeping areas to help prevent CO poisoning.

Use **CORDLESS WINDOW COVERINGS 10** in homes with young children to help prevent strangulation.

Use **ANCHORS TO AVOID FURNITURE AND APPLIANCE TIP-OVERS 11**.

Use **LAYERS OF PROTECTION WITH POOLS AND SPAS 12**.





# CPSC Safety Alert

## Seven Hidden Home Hazards

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>#1 Magnets</b></p> <p>An average of more than 2,000 magnet ingestions per year were seen in hospital emergency departments between 2009-11.</p>	<p>Today's rare-earth magnets can be very small and powerful making them popular in children's toys, desk toys, building sets, and jewelry. As the number of products with magnets has increased, so has the number of serious injuries to children. In several hundred incidents, magnets have fallen out of various toys and been swallowed by children. Small intact pieces of building sets that contain magnets have also been swallowed by children. In other cases, young children have gained access to magnetic desk sets and swallowed multiple desks, while tweens and teenagers have attempted to use them as mock nose and lips piercings. If two or more magnets, or a magnet and another metal object are swallowed separately, they can attract to one another through intestinal walls and get trapped in place. The injury is hard to diagnose. Parents and physicians may think that the materials will pass through the child without consequence, but magnets can attract in the body and twist or pinch the intestines, causing holes, blockages, infection, and death, if not treated properly and promptly.</p> <p><b>TIP</b>  Watch carefully for loose magnets and magnetic pieces and keep away from younger children (less than six). Be aware of the serious inhalation and ingestion danger posed to tweens and teenagers who create mock piercings with high powered magnets. If you have a recalled product with magnets, stop using it, call the company today, and ask for the remedy.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>#2 Recalled Products</b></p> <p>Each year there are at least 400 recalls.</p>	<p>CPSC is very effective at getting dangerous products off store shelves, such as recalled toys, clothing, children's jewelry, tools, appliances, electronics and electrical products. But once a product gets into the home, the consumer has to be on the lookout. Consumers need to be aware of the latest safety recalls to keep dangerous recalled products away from family members.</p> <p><b>TIP</b>  Get dangerous products out of the home. Join CPSC's "Drive To One Million" campaign and follow us on Twitter at @OnSafety or sign up for <b>free</b> e-mail notifications at <a href="http://www.cpsc.gov">www.cpsc.gov</a>—a tweet or e-mail from CPSC is not spam— it could save a life.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>#3 Tip-overs</b></p> <p>One child dies every two weeks from</p>	<p>Furniture, TVs and ranges can tip over and crush young children. Deaths and injuries occur when children climb onto, fall against or pull themselves up on television stands, shelves, bookcases, dressers, desks, and chests. TVs placed on top of</p>



# CPSC Safety Alert

<p>tip-over incident involving TVs, furniture or appliances.</p> <p>Three times per hour, 71 times per day, 2,117 times per month, and 25,400 times per year a child is injured in a tip-over incident.</p>	<p>unstable furniture can tip over causing head trauma and other injuries. Items left on top of the TV, furniture, and countertops, such as toys, remote controls and treats might tempt kids to climb.</p> <p><b>TIP</b>  Verify that furniture is stable on its own. Anchor furniture to the floor or attach to a wall and anchor TVs to the wall or the furniture. Free standing ranges and stoves should be installed with anti-tip brackets.</p>
<p><b>#4</b> <b>Windows &amp; Coverings</b></p> <p>Average of 10 deaths annually from window cords;</p> <p>Average of nine deaths and an estimated 4,100 injuries to children annually from window falls.</p>	<p>Children can strangle on window drapery and blind cords that can form a deadly loop. Parents are urged to use cordless blinds or window coverings that have inaccessible cords in homes with young children. Cords and kids are a dangerous combination, so keep them out of the reach of children. As a short-term fix, cut looped cords and install a safety tassel at the end of each pull cord or use a tie-down device, and install inner cord stays to prevent strangulation. Never place a child's crib or playpen within reach of a window blind.</p> <p>The dangers of windows do not end with window coverings and pull cords. Kids love to play around windows. Unfortunately, kids can be injured or die when they fall out of windows. Do not rely on window screens. Window screens are designed to keep bugs out, not to keep kids in.</p> <p><b>TIP</b>  Safeguard your windows: use cordless blinds and shades or window coverings with inaccessible cords, and install window guards or stops today.</p>
<p><b>#5</b> <b>Pool &amp; Spa Drains</b></p> <p>Zero entrapment-related deaths involving children since 2008.</p>	<p>The suction from a pool drain can be so powerful that it can hold an adult under water, but most incidents involve children. The body can become sealed against the drain or hair can be pulled in and tangled. Missing or broken drain covers are a major reason many entrapment incidents occur. Public pool and spa owners and operators must comply with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act and have safer drain covers that prevent entrapment. Many private pools owners have also improved the safety of their pool by having safer drain covers installed. Pools and spas can also have a back-up system that detects when a drain is blocked and automatically shuts off the pool pump or interrupts the water circulation to prevent an entrapment.</p> <p><b>TIP</b>  Before using a public pool or spa, ask the owner or operator if safer drain covers were installed and if the facility complies with federal safety laws. Check to make sure the drain covers are in place and undamaged.</p>



# CPSC Safety Alert

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>#6</b> <b>Bathtubs</b></p> <p>From 2006-10, there were more than 400 children younger than five who drowned in bathtubs, buckets, bath seats, and toilets.</p>	<p>The danger of drowning for young children is ever present in and around the home. Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death among children ages one to four years-old, and it takes only a few inches of water for a young child to drown.</p> <p><b>TIP</b>  Never leave young children alone near any water or tub or basin with fluid. Young children can drown in even small amounts of liquid. Always keep a young child within arm's reach in a bathtub. If you must leave, take the child with you. Do not leave a baby or young child in a bathtub under the care of another child. Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). It can be a lifesaver when seconds count.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>#7</b> <b>Button Batteries</b></p> <p>From 1997-2010, 40,400 battery ingestions by children younger than 13 were seen in hospital emergency departments. A majority of those cases involved button batteries. Button batteries were involved with 12 deaths between 1995-2010.</p>	<p>Small, coin-sized batteries can be found in products in nearly every home in America. From the flashlight sitting on the table, to the remote control next to the TV, "button batteries" as they are commonly referred to, are in thousands of products used in and around the home. Young children are unintentionally swallowing the button batteries and in some cases, the consequences are immediate and devastating.</p> <p><b>TIP</b>  Discard button batteries carefully. Do not allow children to play with button batteries, and keep button batteries out of your child's reach. Keep remotes and other electronics out of your child's reach if the battery compartments do not have a screw to secure them. Use tape to help secure the battery compartment. If a button battery is ingested, immediately seek medical attention. The National Battery Ingestion Hotline is available anytime at (202) 625-3333 or call the Poison Help line at (800) 222-1222.</p>