

Easy Steps to Prevent Window-Cord Accidents

The accidental strangulation of infants and young children in the cords of window blinds, shades and drapes continues to be an issue, with both inner and pull cords remaining a concern for today's busy parents.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 200 infants and young children have died from accidentally strangling in window cords since 1990. The Window Covering Safety Council (WCSC) recommends that parents check all windows in the home and follow these cord-safety rules:

- Move all cribs, beds, furniture and toys away from windows and window cords, preferably to another wall.
- Keep all window pull cords and inner lift cords out of the reach of

children. Make sure tasseled pull cords are short and continuous-loop cords are permanently anchored to the floor or wall. Make sure cord stops are properly installed and adjusted to limit movement of inner lift cords.

- Lock cords in to position whenever horizontal blinds or shades are lowered, including when they come to rest on a windowsill.
- Replace window blinds, corded shades and draperies manufactured before 2001 with today's safer products. Install cordless window coverings in children's bedrooms and play areas.

With young children in the home, cord safety is an important factor when choosing window treatments. Although

many of today's window fashions come with built-in cord-safety features that meet the latest safety standards, WCSC recommends the use of cordless products in children's bedrooms and play areas.

Almost every type of corded window fashion is now available in a cordless style. Horizontal blinds and miniblinds, as well as pleated and cellular shades, are frequently transformed into cordless products through the use of spring-loaded mechanisms. Wand controls can eliminate cords on vertical blinds and traditionally non-corded rollershades and curtains are always options for consumers.

Those who wish to keep their older window coverings, however, can retrofit them for safety with free kits available through the WCSC Web site, www.windowcoverings.org, or by calling 1-800-506-4636. **HP**

