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Safe installation of blind and curtain cords a must

10 February 2015

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is reminding Queenslanders about the dangers of loose hanging and looped blind and curtain cords following the introduction of a new safety standard.

Fair Trading Executive Director Brian Bauer said low hanging, exposed cords presented a serious strangulation risk to young children.

“At least 15 Australian children have died since 2001 after being caught in blind or curtain cords,” Mr Bauer said.

“Children can easily become entangled in looped cords, but some simple steps can drastically reduce the risk.

“Cords can be fitted with a safety tassel, which joins the ends of a cut cords together but splits when pressure is applied.

“Cords can often be replaced with rods or wands, or secured to the wall by a tensioning device or cleat.

“Cots and other furniture should be kept far enough away that cords are out of reach.”

The Competition and Consumer (Corded Internal Window Coverings) Safety Standard, which commenced on 1 January 2015, applies to the installation of corded internal window coverings in residential buildings.

Installers of window coverings must now follow these measurement and labelling requirements:

- Window coverings that form a loop of 220 mm or longer must be at least 1,600 mm above floor level.
- If part of the cord is less than 1,600 mm above floor level, the cord must be secured or tensioned to prevent the formation of a loop 220 mm or longer.
- A cleat can be used to secure a cord must be installed at least 1,600 mm above floor level.
- The internal window covering must be installed in accordance with the installation instructions on any retail packaging.

- A label must be attached to the corded window covering with the name and contact details of the person or company responsible for the installation.

The standard is not retrospective, so homeowners should check to ensure any pre-existing cords were safely installed. More information on the new standard and window covering cord safety can be obtained from the Product Safety Australia website at www.productsafety.gov.au

For more information on product safety, visit the OFT website at www.qld.gov.au/fairtrading (<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/your-rights/consumer-rights-complaints-and-scams/product-safety-for-consumers>) or call 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

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- are a journalist or media representative
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