

Window Blind Cords in Foster Homes

Window blind cords will be included in the home inspection as one possible safety hazard under WAC 388-148-0155:

What physical structure safety requirements must my home or facility meet?

You must keep the equipment and the physical structures in your home or facility safe and clean for the children you serve....

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) identified window coverings with cords as one of the top five hidden hazards in the home. 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.

CPSC recommends the use of cordless window coverings in all homes where children live or visit.

As part of the Foster Home Inspection, licensors will

- Provide foster parents with information about basic window cord safety
- Inform licensees that pull cords AND inner cords looping can create a danger when children insert their heads through the loop, creating a choking hazard.
- Remind licensee that children can climb on cribs, beds, and furniture placed close to the windows to gain access to the cords.
- Give licensees guidance to make loose cords on the front, side or back of the blind inaccessible.
- If the window shade has looped bead chains or nylon cords, inform the licensee that tension devices may be installed to keep the cord taut.

Basic cord safety

Adapted from the Window Covering Safety Council

http://www.windowcoverings.org/basic_cord_safety.html

Per the Consumer Product Safety Commission, 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.

Free repair kits can be ordered from the Window Covering Safety Council at 800-506-4636 or ordered online at www.windowcoverings.org.

Follow these basic window-cord safety rules:

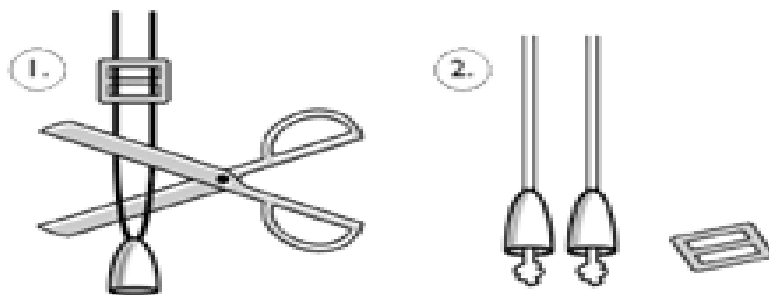
- Move all cribs, beds, furniture and toys away from windows and window cords, preferably to another wall.
- Keep all window pull cords and inner lift cords out of the reach of children. Make sure that tasseled pull cords are short and continuous-loop cords are permanently anchored to the floor or wall. Make sure cord stops are properly installed and adjusted to limit movement of inner lift cords.
- Lock cords into position whenever horizontal blinds or shades are lowered, including when they come to rest on a windowsill.

Retrofit Instructions are found at http://www.windowcoverings.org/how_to_retrofit.html. Instructions for repairing roman shades and roll up blinds are also at this site.

ELIMINATE LOOPED PULL CORDS

(pre-1995 miniblinds and pleated shades)

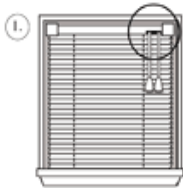
1. Cut the looped pull cord above the tassel, and remove equalizer buckle (if any).
2. Insert cord through tassel and tie cord ends to secure the tassel.



INSTALL CORD STOPS

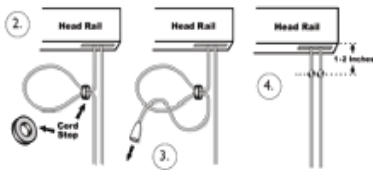
(all pre-2001 horizontal blinds and corded shades)

1. Lower the blind to its proper length and lock cords into position at head rail.



For each pull cord:

2. Pinch together a portion of the pull cord to create a loop near the head rail, then slide the cord stop over the loop end.
3. Slip the free end of the pull cord through the loop to loosely knot the cord stop onto the pull cord.
4. Tighten the knot to secure the cord stop one to two inches below the head rail to limit movement of inner lift cords.



INSTALL TIE-DOWN DEVICES

(pre-1997 vertical blinds and draperies)

1. Insert cord or chain into tie-down device.
2. Attach the tie-down device to the floor or wall so that the cord is fully extended and securely fastened.

