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Issue 1

## The General Product Safety Regulations 2005 Window Blinds and Curtain Cords

This Authority wishes to alert businesses to the danger posed by window blinds and curtain cords

Such cords pose a danger of strangulation to young children, the General product Safety Regulations 2005 require you to sell "Safe Products".

This Fact Sheet has been prepared to assist manufacturers, retailers and others in the supply chain to comply with the regulations.

A "Safe Product" is one which under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use including duration and, where applicable, putting into service installation and maintenance requirements does not present any risk or only the minimum risk compatible with the products use, considered to be acceptable and consistent with a high level of protection for the safety and health of persons.

A new standard BS EN 13120:2009 (Internal Blinds – Performance Requirements Including Safety) will assist businesses in manufacturing and supplying products which are safe for consumer use.

Section 8.2 of the Standard deals with the risk of strangulation.

The steps it requires are:

1. The attachment of a warning notice to the product.
2. The provision of advice to keep cords and chains or similar out of reach of children (with instructions for its proper use)
3. Where the product requires a looped operating mechanism, the manufacturer must provide a means to limit the risk by incorporating it into the design or by an appropriate device supplied with the product.

We recommend that manufacturers design to the Standard and suppliers sell products complying with this Standard.

Consumers of your window coverings should be advised of the hazards and how children can be protected by taking the appropriate precautions.

You may have sold products which do not comply with the new Standard. The General product Safety Regulations require producers to take appropriate measures to inform consumers of the risks and where necessary recall of the product. Distributors are required to act with due care and to only supply products that meet the Regulations.

Remedial advice to customers should be as follows:

1. Cords opening in a loop are particularly risky  
  
Where possible operating cords, chains and tapes or similar should be kept short. Cut the cord to get rid of the loop and install tassels.
2. Cords should be out of the reach of children.  
Replace cords with curtain or blind wands.
3. Where cords cannot be cut or tied down, a tension device can be used to pull the cord tight and secure it to the floor or wall.
4. 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.
5. Keep sofas, chairs, tables, shelves or book cases away from windows to prevent children climbing up and reaching curtains or blind cords. People in charge of children are ultimately responsible for following the safety instructions provided by the manufacturer.

For a full version of the new Standards contact The British Standards Institute or if you are a Hampshire Library member it may be viewed through their online Reference and Information Service.

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A guide to the General product Safety Regulations can be obtained from the UK Department for Business Innovation and Skills website.