



# WINDOW *Safety*

During the warmer months of spring and summer, we are all tempted to open our windows and let in the fresh air. However, when windows are left open, incidents of children falling out of them increases dramatically and can result in serious injuries or death. Window falls constitute the most serious of all injuries from falls and the most deaths.

## The Best Solution for the Problem: PREVENTION!

- Supervising your children is the best way to keep them safe.
- Keep windows closed and locked when children are around.
- Keep furniture-or anything children can climb-away from windows.
- Never depend on screens to keep children from falling. Many incidents where children fall out of a window are from the child leaning on the screen.

### *Did You Know?*

A person can fall a mere two feet and still suffer a head injury. Inserting a guard that allows a window to open only four inches, or ten centimeters is enough to keep a child from falling.

## Window Guards: To Have or Not to Have?

- Window guards need to have a release mechanism so the window can be opened in case of an emergency. Consult your local fire department or building code official to determine proper window guard placement.
- Some homes have window guards, security bars, grilles, or grates already installed. It is recommended to replace these guards if they do not have a release mechanism.
- Air conditioners will also inhibit escape in lieu of an emergency. Do not install air conditioners in windows needed for escape. There should be at least one window in each sleeping and living area that meets escape and rescue requirements.

## Window Coverings

Window coverings also pose a significant threat to children and babies. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, there have been at least 200 reports of strangulation deaths involving cords and chains on window coverings since 1991.

- Keep all window cords out of reach of children. Make sure tasseled pull cords are short, and that continuous-loop cords are permanently anchored to the floor or wall.
- Move cribs, beds, furniture and toys away from windows. If a baby is placed in a crib or playpen within reach a window covering, he could easily become tangled.
- To prevent inner-cord hazards, lock cords into position when lowering horizontal coverings or shades.
- Consider installing cordless window coverings in children's bedrooms and play areas.
- Repair window coverings, corded shades and draperies manufactured before 2001 with retrofit cord-repair devices, or replace them with today's safer products.

# WINDOW AIR CONDITIONERS



Let's face it. We do not always have the luxury of a nice and breezy central air unit. For many people, window air conditioning units are a good alternative. They are affordable and relatively easy to install. However, these units can pose safety risks if not used properly. Unsecured window A/C units can fall out of windows. If someone were to be walking underneath the window at that time he/she could be seriously injured, or even killed. In addition, if an A/C is installed incorrectly it will make it very easy for an intruder to enter the home through that window.

## Window Air Conditioning Safety Tips

- Do not install an air conditioner in a window needed for escape or rescue in an emergency. It is vital to have at least one window in each sleeping and living area that meets escape and rescue requirements.
- Be sure to install window air conditioners according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Make sure the window and window frame being used are in good condition.
- Make sure the unit is installed securely. Support the A/C from underneath or firmly fasten it from inside. Metal brackets and mounting rails should be used for a safe installation.
- Supporting metal brackets should be fastened to the building envelope and strong enough for the size and weight of the unit.
- Secure leveling objects in order to prevent movement and shifting due to vibration from the A/C and weather conditions.
- Install the A/C so it remains in place when the window is opened, and so the window cannot be opened accidentally.
- When in doubt, hire a professional.
- Never use an extension cord or power bar to supply a window air conditioner, these units must be plugged directly into a receptacle.

## Emergencies

Windows provide a secondary means of escape if your home is on fire. It is important to have a planned emergency escape plan, and to teach it to your children. Practice this plan with them, and ensure they know how to use a window safely under these circumstances.

## Links of Interest

### **[www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)**

The National Safety Council works to prevent injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the roads through leadership, research, education, and advocacy.

### **[www.homesafetycouncil.org](http://www.homesafetycouncil.org)**

The Home Safety Council is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing home related injuries through education.

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