

Mr Chris Morris
HM Area Coroner
Coroner's Court
1 Mount Tabor Street
Stockport
SK1 3AG

13 April 2021

Dear Mr Morris,

Re: Regulation 28 Report into the death of Joey Jenson Walker

I am writing with an update to our joint letter with Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents of 8 January 2021.

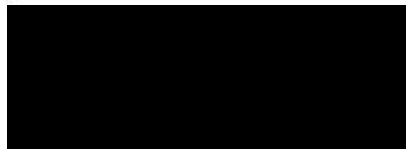
The BBSA has worked with Trading Standards and RoSPA to produce some specific guidance for Landlords highlighting their responsibilities and how to make existing blinds safer. I am enclosing a copy for your information.

We have also updated our child safety website to include landlords in the menu options and to signpost this guidance on this website – www.makeitsafe.org.uk.

I am pleased to report the National Residential Landlords Association are supporting the dissemination of this guidance to their members. We are in contact with others in the residential letting sector to do the same.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



Director of Operations
British Blind and Shutter Association



Landlord Advice on Window Blind Safety

Introduction

According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents since 1999 there have been at least 35 fatalities where babies and young children have become accidentally entangled in internal window blind cords and chains.

Some of these accidents have occurred in rented homes.

Landlord's responsibilities

Advice from Trading Standards states:

- Landlords have a duty of care to their tenants, including keeping their rented properties safe and free from health hazards: <https://www.gov.uk/renting-out-a-property/landlord-responsibilities>
- Landlords therefore have a responsibility to ensure all blinds installed anywhere in their properties which contain cords or chains (which may be hazardous) are safe
- If the blinds cannot be made safe by the addition of a compliant safety device(s) they should be replaced
- Blinds installed by the landlord or their agent after February 2014 must be compliant with the child safety requirements of BS EN 13120:2009+A1:2014
- Blinds installed by the tenant should be checked to ensure they are compliant as part of the landlord/agent inspections
- Tenants should be advised of the child safety aspects of internal window blinds
- Compliance with the standard is required irrespective of the age of the tenants, including where no children are present
- This advice covers all residential environments and will include (but is not exclusive to) homes, holiday homes, mobile homes, caravans and boats

Window blind standards

The child safety requirements of the internal window blind standards were changed in February 2014. The applicable legislation is the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 and compliance with the standards provides a presumption of conformity with these regulations.

In summary, the standards require:

- All safety systems and safety critical items of internal blinds to be tested
- All products to be either inherently safe/'safe by design' (contain no dangerous loops or cords) or for cords and chains to be provided with safety device(s) at the point of manufacture
- All products containing cords/chains must be securely fitted with safety device(s) supplied during installation to eliminate any potential hazardous loops or entanglement
- All safety devices must be securely fitted at least 1.5m from the floor except for breakaway devices – these must be at least 0.6m from the floor
- Instructions must be left with the customer and all warning labels left on the product at the point of fitting. The installer/ instruction leaflet must inform you why the safety device(s) are necessary, how and where they need to be installed and how to correctly operate the blind

New blinds

The BBSA strongly recommends that blinds which are inherently safe, sometimes called 'safe by design', are used in rented properties as these do not require any supplementary safety devices. As such these blind styles do not need testing to the standards.

Watch the video on what to look for in new blinds here:
www.makeitsafe.org.uk/resource/look-new-blinds/


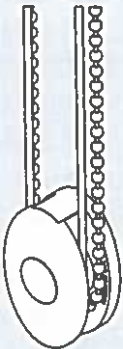
You can find your local BBSA member by searching on www.bbsa.org.uk.





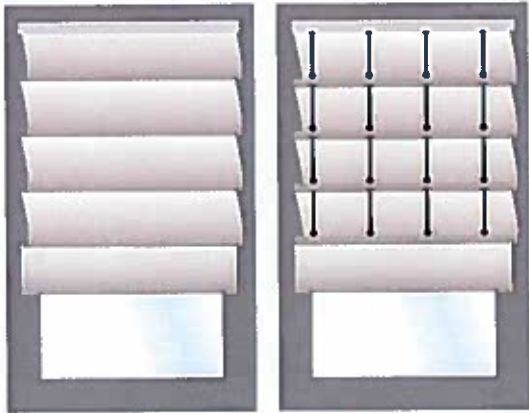
Existing Blinds


Blinds installed prior to 2014 may not include safety features but every style of blind can be made safer.

Name	Description	How to make blind safer
<p>Roller Blind</p>	<p>Barrel at top of window, one sheet of fabric.</p> <p>Operated by a spring with a centre pull cord (likely to be safe if cord is less than 220mm).</p> <p>or</p> <p>Operated by a continuous chain or cord on one side of the blind. →</p> 	<p>If your blind has a continuous looped chain or cord securely fit a device to hold this taut as in the picture below.</p>  <p>The BBSA does not recommend using new breakaway chain connectors on old blinds as it is not possible to guarantee the required breakaway tolerance when mixing new and old.</p> <p>Watch the video here:</p> <p>www.makeitsafe.org.uk/resource/make-existing-roller-blinds-safer/</p>

Name	Description	How to make blind safer
<p>Vertical Blind</p>	<p>Headrail at top of window, fabric slats/louvres.</p> <p>Operation by a wand to draw the louvres across the window and tilt the slats = inherently safe.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Operation by continuous chain to tilt the louvres and continuous cord to draw the louvres. →</p> 	<p>If your blind has a continuous looped chain and cord securely fit a device(s) to hold these taut as in the picture below.</p>  <p>Watch the video here:</p> <p>www.makeitsafe.org.uk/resource/make-existing-vertical-blinds-safer/</p>

Name	Description	How to make blind safer
<p>Venetian blind</p>	<p>Headrail at top of the window, metal, plastic or wooden horizontal slats.</p> <p>Cords to raise/lower the blind. →</p> <p>Wand to tilt the slats or cords to tilt the slats. →</p> 	<p>If your blind has cords to raise and lower the blind these should be a minimum of 1.5m from the floor with the blind in the fully lowered position.</p> <p>Fit a cleat at least 1.5m from the floor around which the cords can be wrapped after each and every use of the blind.</p> <p>If the tilt cords are excessively long then consider fitting a cleat to house the cords after each and every use.</p> <p>Watch the video here:</p> <p>www.makeitsafe.org.uk/resource/make-existing-venetian-blinds-safer/</p> 

Name	Description	How to make blind safer
<p>Roman blind</p>	<p>Headrail at top of window, soft fabric covering which folds as it is retracted.</p> <p>This is probably the most difficult blind style to make safer.</p> <p>Operation tends to be cords to raise/lower the blinds or a continuous cord or chain to one side of the blind. →</p> <p>However, this style of blind also uses cords on the back of the fabric to gather the fabric into folds. If the distance between the folds is greater than 200mm then a suitable cord breakaway system should be used. This is often challenging to retrofit onto an old blind. →</p>  <p>Front of blind Back of blind</p>	<p>If your blind has cords to raise and lower the blind these should be a minimum of 1.5m from the floor with the blind in the fully lowered position.</p> <p>Fit a cleat at least 1.5m from the floor around which the cords can be wrapped after each and every use of the blind as shown above.</p> <p>If your blind has a continuous looped chain or cord securely fit a device to hold this taut as shown above.</p> <p>If you cannot retrofit safety devices to the cords on the back of the blinds you should replace the blind.</p> <p>Watch the video here:</p> <p>www.makeitsafe.org.uk/resource/make-existing-roman-blinds-safer/</p>

Name	Description	How to make blind safer
<p>Pleated blind</p>	<p>Headrail at the top of window on which pleated (concertina) fabric is held.</p> <p>Operation tends to be cords to raise/lower the blinds or a continuous cord or chain to one side of the blind.</p> 	<p>If your blind has cords to raise and lower the blind these should be a minimum of 1.5m from the floor with the blind in the fully lowered position.</p> <p>Fit a cleat at least 1.5m from the floor around which the cords can be wrapped after each and every use of the blind as shown above.</p> <p>If your blind has a continuous looped chain or cord securely fit a device to hold this taut as shown above.</p> <p>Watch the video here:</p> <p>www.makeitsafe.org.uk/resource/make-existing-pleated-blinds-safer/</p>

Curtain tracks

The same safety requirements apply for corded curtain tracks.

Other resources for landlords



Available in 12 languages. Free to download.

Where to get more information:
www.makeitsafe.org.uk

This leaflet is intended only to give general and preliminary guidance and is for information purposes only. It does not, and is not intended to give, professional or technical advice. The reader should always seek specific advice from a professional. Unless arising as a result of the BBSA's negligence, the BBSA accepts no liability in contract or tort, and are not responsible for any loss (howsoever caused), and whether arising directly or indirectly, as a result of any action taken based upon the information contained in this leaflet.

British Blind and Shutter Association

PO Box 232, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 9AR.

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