

Don't be BLIND to the dangers!

For those with young children, there are many things to consider when making the home as safe as possible. Safety can sometimes be far down the list and the consequences can often be heart breaking.

Sadly, more than 30 babies and toddlers in the UK have died due to injuries caused by blind cords in the last 15 years.

Stringent new safety legislation came into effect in 2014 and as a result, all blinds placed on the market must be safe by design or be supplied with the appropriate child safety devices installed. These safety devices either break under pressure or tension of the cord or chain or provide the facility to store cords or chains out of reach. Many homes will have blinds fitted before this date so it is important to check them all.

Simple steps such as securing cords and chains with safety devices and keeping furniture away from windows so that children cannot climb can help prevent accidents and deaths. Be aware when visiting other homes or places to check if there are blind cords within reach. If your blind is operated by cords, such as a venetian blind, use a cleat to store the cord.

Cleats should be securely fixed to an adjacent surface out of the reach of children and at least 1.5 metres from the floor. The cords must be secured in a figure of eight after each and every operation of the blind. Ensure all spare cord is securely contained on the cleat. Blind installers are obliged to install such devices in order to comply with the standard.

Check out the video on the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council website which demonstrates just how quickly and easily serious injury or death can occur if young children become entangled in a looped blind cord or chain.

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-information/community-advice/health-wellbeing/home-safety/>

Visit www.makeitsafe.org.uk for more information on how to make blinds safer