

SAFEGUARDS

SGS CONSUMER TESTING SERVICES

HARDLINES, SOFTLINES

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EU REQUIREMENTS ON LOOPED CORDS FOR INTERNAL BLINDS EXTENDED

On the 28th of July the EU Commission published a new decision; [2011/477/EU](#) to address certain risks posed to children by internal blinds, corded window coverings and safety devices.

In a sample of 15 hospitals in the EU in 1998, there were 129 children hospitalised due to injuries involving window blind or drapery loop cords. In the period of 2008 – 2010, 10 fatalities occurred in Ireland, United Kingdom, Finland, Netherlands and Turkey. Since 1999, 119 fatalities have occurred in the United States, 28 fatalities in Canada since 1986 and at least 10 fatalities in Australia since 2000.

The European standard EN 13120:2009 Internal blinds – Performance requirements including safety, does not include some models of blinds that have been linked to accidents. The decision 2011/477/EU lays out the safety requirements for the following additional designs in pursuant to the General Product Safety Directive [2001/95/EC](#). Future European standards for this type of product will be based on the requirements set out in the Decision.

- Roman Shades
- Austrian/Festoon blinds
- Panel Blinds
- Plantation shutters
- Roll up blinds.



Source: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/projects/index_en.htm#wbc

The decision requirements are also applicable to other products that have cords or chains that form hazardous loops and are accessible such as draperies, insect screens and blinds in sealed glazed units.

DECISION REQUIREMENTS (SECTION2)

- Cords or chains shall not form a hazardous loop
- Appropriate safety devices shall be provided to minimize the risk of strangulation where the product design does not eliminate the risk that a hazardous loop is formed.
- Safety devices shall be provided as an integral part of the product.
- Non integral safety devices shall be preinstalled on the operating cords or chains with a conspicuously displayed warning label on the safety device conveying at least the following message: 'Children can strangle if this device is not installed. Read carefully the instructions and install accordingly. Always use this device to keep cords or chains out of reach of children'.

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- Safety devices shall be resistant to operation by children, there shall be no sharp edges, protruding parts, release of small parts or finger entrapment hazards. In addition, the safety device shall sustain durability and fatigue tests and be resistant to ageing due to weather conditions.
- Cords and chains shall not release small parts.

PRODUCT SAFETY INFORMATION (SECTION 3)

The decision also requires product safety information and warnings to be provided with the product.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SAFETY DEVICES INTENDED FOR RETROFITTING (SECTION 4)

Safety devices suitable for retrofitting to corded internal blinds and window coverings must meet the requirements set out in section 2 and shall be accompanied by specific warnings, information and instructions.

The Decision comes into force on 17 August 2011.

Other countries such as the U.S has a regulation to avoid looped cords and Australia which has had at least 15 deaths since 1990 has issued their own public awareness information which is similar to the European Child Safety Alliance information (see [SafeGuards 198/10](#)).

SGS will keep you informed on the progress of the new window blind cords requirements as they become available.

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