

# New Standards for Internal Window Blinds

## Introduction

According to RoSPA since 1999 there have been 28 fatalities where babies and young children have become accidentally entangled with internal window blind cords and chains. 15 of these fatalities have occurred since 2010.

As far as the British Blind & Shutter Association (BBSA) are able to ascertain all of these tragic fatalities have occurred in the home and typically have involved children around 22 months of age.

The BBSA launched a campaign called Make it Safe in 2009 to help educate the trade and consumers in the safe installation and use of internal window blinds and have campaigned for revisions to product standards.

### What?

**Internal window blinds with cords and chains**

### Where?

**All homes**

**All public buildings**

**Some commercial buildings**

### When?

**Now**

## Standards and Regulation

### On 27 July 2011 the EU issued a Decision (2011/477/EU) entitled:

“Commission Decision on the safety requirements to be met by European standards to address certain risks posed to children by internal blinds, corded window coverings and safety devices pursuant to Directive 2001/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.”

### On 28 February 2014 BSI published these in the UK:

**BS EN 13120:2009+A1:2014** – Internal blinds – Performance requirements including safety

**BS EN 16433:2014** – Internal blinds – Protection from strangulation hazards – Test methods

**BS EN 16434:2014** – Internal blinds – Protection from strangulation hazards – Requirements and Test methods for safety devices

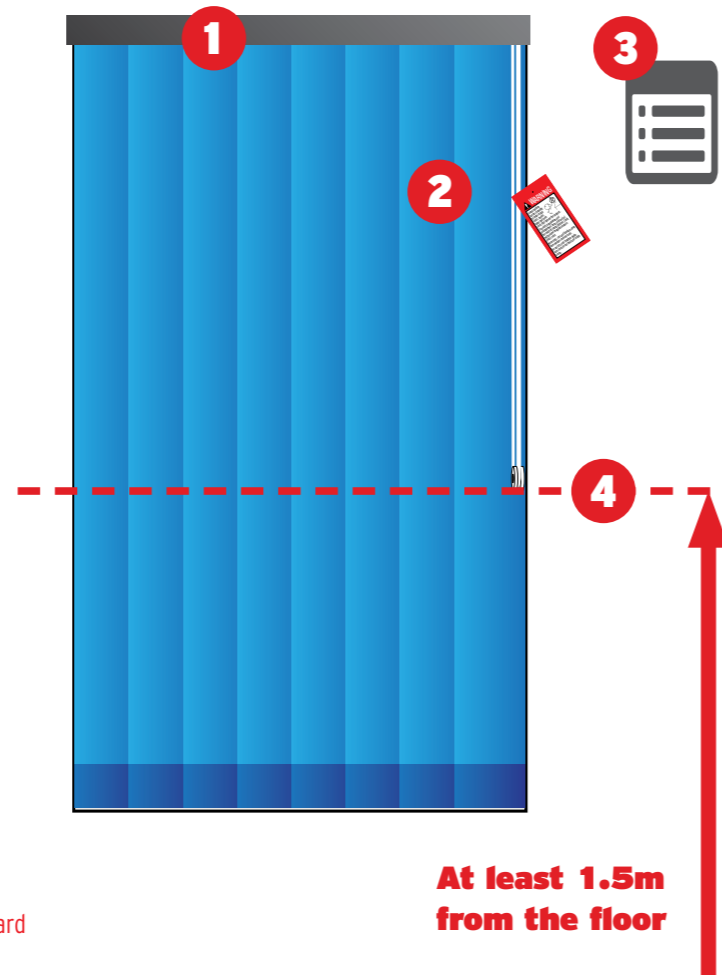
**Compliance = Presumption of conformity with General Products Safety Regulations 2005**  
Professionally installed products would also be subject to the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act

## Blinds with looped cords

### Tensioning devices

**Examples** - Blinds with side chain/cord operation such as rollers, verticals, romans and venetians

1. Name or trademark on the blind
2. General warning notice left on the blind
3. Product instructions left with the customer
4. Tensioning device securely fitted at the maximum distance from the headrail and at least 1.5m from the floor



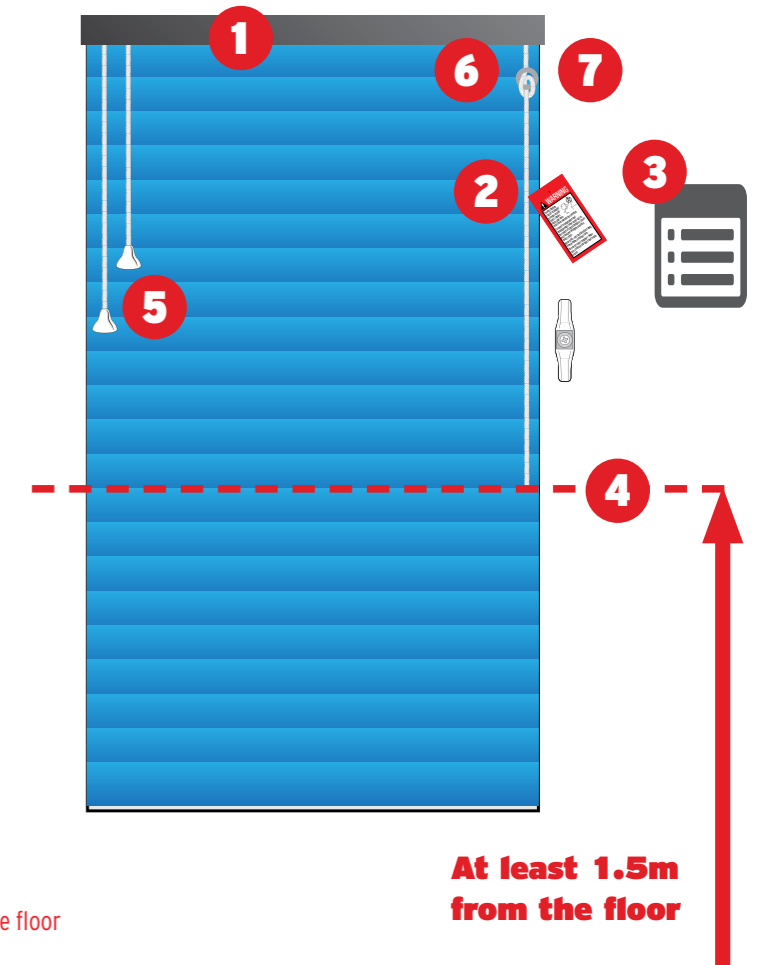
NB - Stabilising chains on vertical blinds are not covered by the standard

## Blinds with pull cords

### Accumulation devices

**Examples** - Blinds with/without cord locks such as venetian, roman and pleated

1. Name or trademark on the blind
2. General warning notice left on the blind
3. Product instructions left with the customer
4. Accumulation device securely fitted at least 1.5m from floor and as near to the headrail as possible
5. Non-tangle tassels. An accumulation device also required if cords at lowest point (fully tilted) extend below 1.5m from the floor
6. Cord stops to be fitted as close to the headrail as possible and not more than 50mm away, with the blind being in the fully extended position
7. If more than two pull cords (and less than 5) a breakaway system is needed.

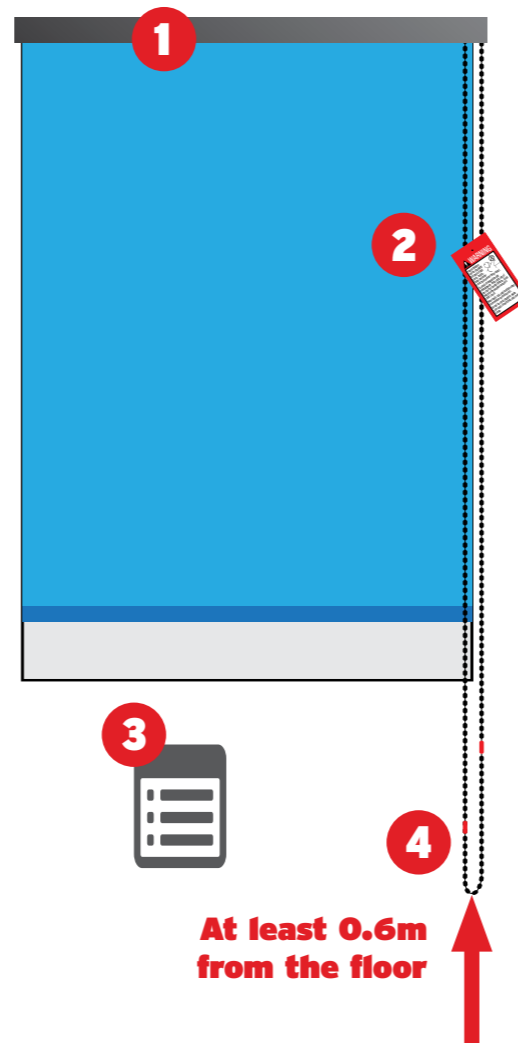


NB - A blind with pull cords must not be fitted less than 1.5m from the floor

## Blinds with breakaway devices

**Examples** - Blinds with side chain/cord operation where the full length of the cord or chain does not go through the mechanism to fully raise/lower the blind

1. Name or trademark on the blind
2. General warning notice left on the blind
3. Product instructions left with the customer
4. Breakaway connector(s) installed and cord/chain at least 0.6m from the floor



## Roman blind lift cords

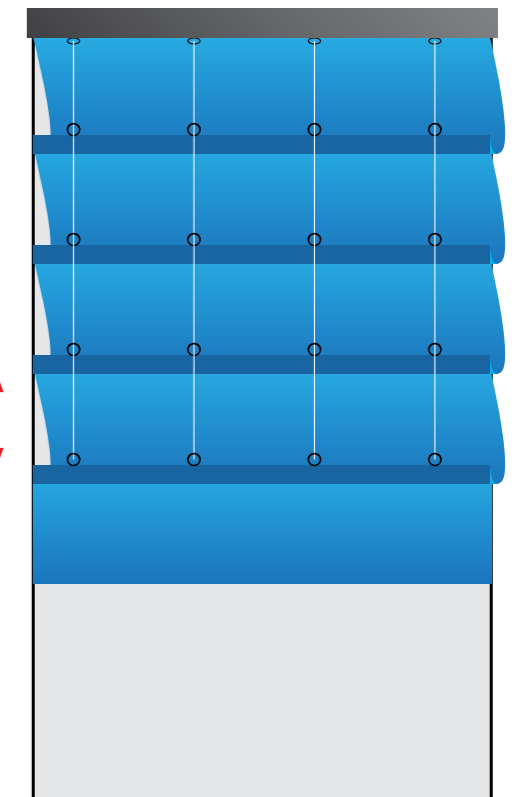
### Operating cords and chains

The requirements for operating cords and chains will be dependent on the safety device(s) used as shown on these pages.

**≤ 200mm**

If the maximum distance between two consecutive attachment/retention points of inner cords is less than or equal to 200mm then you should not need a breakaway system.

If the blind does not meet these criteria a compliant safety system must be used on the lift/rear cords.



# Requirements of the standards

**The child safety requirements of these standards run to some 40 pages but in summary the 2014 standards require:**

- Safety devices for preventing any cords or chains from creating a hazardous loop
- The testing of all safety critical systems of internal blinds
- The testing of blinds using safety systems
- The fitting of safety devices on cords or chains at the point of manufacture
- Limitation on cord or chain lengths
- Warnings and instructions
- Packaging and point-of-sale

**Where an additional safety device is required to make the blind safe this must be installed**

## Which premises are affected?

The EU Decision and standards deal with internal blinds with cords and chains that could create a hazardous loop "intended to be installed in premises where children 0-42 months are likely to have access or to be present."

## What to look for in new window blinds

When considering new window blinds in homes or public buildings the BBSA strongly recommends that you choose a window blind

There are child safe alternatives of every blind style available now

## Where?

"...all reasonably foreseeable environments where young children have access to or are likely to be present, such as, for example, homes, hotels, hospitals, churches, shops, schools, nurseries, and public places in general. Blinds and window coverings to be fitted in offices or any other place, which is transformed from its initial destination and where young children are likely to be present, shall also be subject to the present requirements."

EU Decision (2011/477/EU)

that is safe by design meaning that it does not use cords or chains to operate it or it uses concealed or tensioned cords and chains.

## How to make existing window blinds safer

Existing blinds that are installed are not covered by the new standards but the BBSA strongly urges those responsible for or using blinds in all homes and public buildings to consider making existing blinds safer by using retrofit safety devices.

At the very least cords and chains should be kept out of reach of babies and small children.

Retrofit safety devices should be compliant with BS EN 16434:2014.

## Curtain Tracks

The EU Decision also contains requirements for curtain tracks. "Although at the time this standard has been published no standard exists for draperies, test methods specified in the present standard may be used for such products." BS EN 16434:2014

## Where to get more information

Contact a BBSA member or Make it Safe Dealer\* who will be able to help you further.  
[www.bbsa.org.uk](http://www.bbsa.org.uk)

The Make it Safe website contains further information, videos and brochures.  
[www.makeitsafe.org.uk](http://www.makeitsafe.org.uk)



\* All BBSA members are part of the BBSA's Make it Safe campaign. Make it Safe dealers are not full members of the BBSA but have shown their commitment to child safety by joining the campaign.

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