

**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Child Care**

Window Covering Guidelines

Effective: October 1, 2010

BACKGROUND:

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has identified window coverings with cords as one of the top five hidden hazards in the home. About once a month a child between 7 months and 10 years old dies from window cord strangulation and another child suffers a near strangulation. In recent years, CPSC has recalled over five million window coverings, including Roman shades, roller and roll-up blinds, vertical and horizontal blinds.

Strangulation deaths and injuries can occur anywhere in the house where a window covering with a cord is installed. Children can wrap window covering cords around their necks or can pull cords that are not clearly visible but are accessible and become entangled in the loops. These incidents happen quickly and silently. To prevent these tragedies CPSC recommends the use of cordless window coverings in all homes where children live and visit.

Most window blinds sold prior to November 2000 have inner cords (for raising the slats of the blinds) that can be pulled by a child and form a loop in which the child's neck can entangle. Consumers operating a family child care home, licensed child care center, approved nursery school or pre-school program should immediately remove or repair these types of blinds. **For a free repair kit, call the Window Covering Safety Council at 1-800-506-4636 or visit windowcoverings.org.**

NEW LAW:

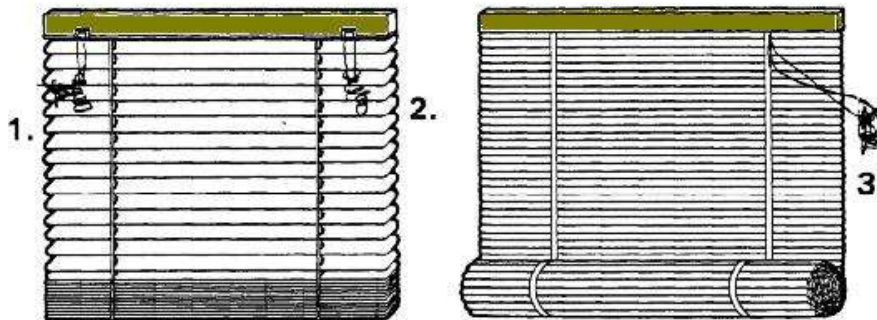
Maryland's Angel's Law, enacted October 1, 2010, requires new and replacement coverings in foster homes, family day care homes, and child care centers; requires certain existing window coverings to meet certain minimum standards, and requires the replacement of certain window coverings under certain circumstances.

Window coverings in a child care facility/foster care facility shall comply with Maryland State requirements as set forth in Family Law Articles §§5-505 and 5-573 to include the following:

a) A window covering installed before October 1, 2010, shall not have exposed cords or unsecured cords, beads, ropes or strings.

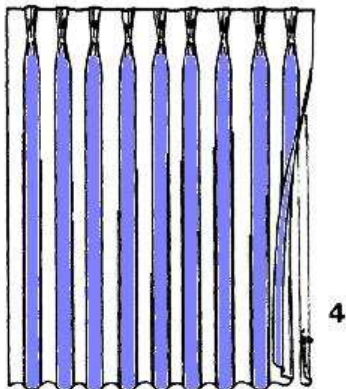
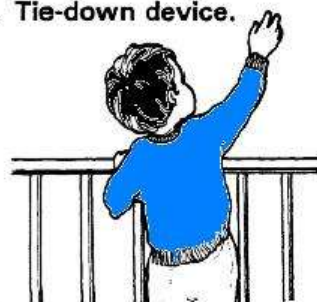
- Any Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Office of Child Care (OCC) licensed, registered, or approved child care program must immediately take the following actions to reduce any existing hazard:
 - Examine all shades and blinds in the home. Make sure there are no accessible cords on the front, side, or back of the product.
 - If the window shade has looped bead chains or nylon cords, install a tension device to keep the cord taut.
 - Do not place cribs, beds, furniture close to the windows because children can climb on them and gain access to the cords.

Parents should know that children can strangle in window blind or drapery cords



To keep cords out of the reach of children, use these devices:

1. Clamp or clothes pin.
2. Tie the cord to itself.
3. Cleat.
4. Tie-down device.



b) Any window covering installed on or after October 1, 2010 shall be cordless.

- **A “cordless” window covering is:**
 - A horizontal blind or cellular shade that has no draw cord and the internal lift cord runs in the slats of the horizontal blind so that the cord is incapable of forming a loop greater than 7.25 inches;
 - A Roman shade, roll-up blind or woven shade that has no draw cord and the lift cord is completely enclosed so that it is not accessible;
 - A vertical blind that has a wand as its operating mechanism and does not contain any beaded chains, corded pulleys, or other cord loop operating mechanism; or
 - A roller shade that does not contain a cord or beaded chain.

Contact: Office of Child Care Licensing Branch
Paula Johnson, Branch Chief
Paulad.Johnson@maryland.gov