

Make it Safe Campaign launched by BBSA



The British Blind and Shutter Association (BBSA) has been promoting blind safety in relation to looped blind cords for a number of years and many manufacturers and suppliers have adopted the Association's advice. However, the BBSA now wants to see a universal adoption of child safety practices across the industry and the launch of its "make it safe" campaign is designed to help achieve this.

The make it safe campaign has a clear and unequivocal message for those dealing with the general public, that they have an absolute responsibility to ensure child safety issues are discussed with prospective clients at each and every survey. In addition it is strongly recommended that whilst on site a review of existing shading products is carried out and retrofit devices that can improve their safety are also discussed. Whilst the risks associated with blind cords are extremely slight, old blinds potentially pose a greater risk than their modern equivalents.

The standard goes on to state that; "persons in charge of children are ultimately responsible for following the safety instructions supplied by the manufacturer", so it is imperative that these instructions are always provided.

This simple advice applies to all blinds in homes and buildings where children and vulnerable people may be present.

The Sheriff involved in the case of the tragic death of a young girl in Scotland in February

2008 has just published his findings. His report alleges that every year a child dies by strangulation by blind cords and has received widespread media coverage. He alludes to the very substantial number of blinds that are already installed which do not have safety features or devices and highlights the need for a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of the possible hazard associated with looped blind cords. To this end the BBSA will continue to represent the industry and will work with Government and safety organisations but this does highlight the need to consider retrospective installation of safety devices when on site.

Commenting on the make it safe campaign BBSA President Dave Morgan stated "The positive response we have had from manufactures, suppliers and installers to the make it safe campaign has been extremely encouraging. I cannot see a reason why anyone involved in our industry would not want to adopt the advice the BBSA has offered and that



is detailed in the European Standard. Whilst the risks posed by blinds cords are extremely slight this recent case proves that the consequences of an accident are devastating and the BBSA's message to the blind industry is to always make it safe and to make sure your customers do the same."

The BBSA have also played an active role in ensuring safety recommendations are incorporated in the relevant European Standard (EN 13120 Internal Blind Performance including Safety) and in essence this standard states that:

- warning notices should be attached to the product in a prominent position
- to limit the risk of strangulation a device shall be incorporated into the product or provided to keep cords, chains and tapes out of the reach of children

