

# Window blind safety



**What to look for in new blinds and how to make existing blinds safer**

## Built-in safety systems

Built-in safety systems are those that are built into the product and so do not require additional installation or operation in use.

Some window sizes or shapes may not lend themselves to cordless window blinds or you may specifically wish to co-ordinate with your existing blinds. If this is the case then choose a blind style with a built-in safety device, such as a chain break connector where the chain is designed to separate under any undue pressure. Breakaway tassels at the bottom of cords work in the same way.

**Note:** By law there are limitations on cord and chain lengths for built-in safety systems.

### Examples



A breakaway device on the cords of a roman blind. The blind raises and lowers normally but cords will separate under undue loads



Chain break connector will part under any undue load but after inspection can be clipped back together again

## Separate safety systems

Separate safety systems are those that require additional installation and/or operation in use.

If cordless options or those with built-in safety devices are not suitable for your specific situation then the only alternative is to use a blind with a separate safety device such as a tensioning system or an accumulation device like a cleat. Make sure the device is securely fitted and always used.

**Note:** By law there are limitations on cord and chain lengths for separate safety systems. Fixing height limitations also apply.

### Examples



Cord and chain tensor for vertical blinds to hold cord and chain taut



Chain tensioner to hold a single chain or cord taut



### The British Blind and Shutter Association

The BBSA is the UK's only trade association representing companies that manufacture, supply and install interior and exterior blinds, awnings, security grilles and shutters. The BBSA launched the Make it Safe campaign in 2009 and has campaigned for safer blinds so welcomes improved safety standards for internal window blinds. To see more about the BBSA's Make it Safe campaign visit: [www.makeitsafe.org.uk](http://www.makeitsafe.org.uk)

### Advice in this brochure and the Make it Safe campaign is supported by:

#### The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

RoSPA's mission is to save lives and reduce injuries in all areas of life and has achieved significant changes through its campaigning work over the 90 years since its inception. [www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

#### Child Accident Prevention Trust

A leading UK charity working to reduce the number of children and young people killed, disabled or seriously injured in accidents. [www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk)



### British Blind and Shutter Association

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Your BBSA member or approved Make it Safe dealer is:

# Safe by Design Blinds

Blinds come in an endless range of colours and finishes but when buying new blinds for your home, you must consider the way they are operated.

## Safe by Design

A blind which is Safe by Design is one that is cordless or has concealed or tensioned cords.

- Usually these blinds are pushed or pulled into position
- Motorised blinds can also remove the need for operating cords at the side of the blind
- Wooden shutters and external blinds are other cordless styles of window dressing

Always consider these blind styles first when choosing your blinds.



Wand operated vertical blinds - pushed and pulled into position by the wand which when twisted tilts the louvres



Venetian blinds can be raised, lowered and tilted by hand without operating cords and chains



Spring operated roller blind - some styles operate with a decelerator so the blind retracts at a constant, gentle speed



Tensioned pleated blind - all cords are held under tension and the blind is just pushed or pulled into position



Shutters are opened and closed by hand



Motorised roller blinds are easy to operate and have no cords or chains – some are battery operated too so do not need connecting to the mains

There are **Safe by Design** options for:  
Roller | Venetian | Vertical | Pleated | Roman

## Making your existing blinds safer

If you have a window blind which has an operating cord or chain that could form a loop you must keep it out of the reach of babies and young children. There are a range of safety devices available for every type of blind.

### Chain-break connector

These will break apart when undue pressure is applied on the operating chain but, after inspection, can be reconnected again. Chain sizes vary so you **must** use the chain-break connector which is designed to be used with your specific chain.



### Cord/Chain tidys & tensioners

These devices should be securely fixed to an adjacent surface and at the maximum distance from the top of the blind so the cords and/or chains are held permanently taut by the device.



### Cleat

This 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.



Young children can be strangled by loops in pull cords, chains, tapes and inner cords that operate the product. To avoid strangulation and entanglement, keep cords out of the reach of young children. Cords may become wrapped around a child's neck.

Make sure all cords and chains are always secured out of reach of babies and young children. Do not tie cords or chains together. Make sure cords or chains do not twist and create a loop.



Move beds, cots, highchairs and playpens away from window covering cords and chains.



Move furniture away from window covering cords and chains as children love to climb.



See the Make it Safe video for more options

[www.makeitsafe.org.uk](http://www.makeitsafe.org.uk)