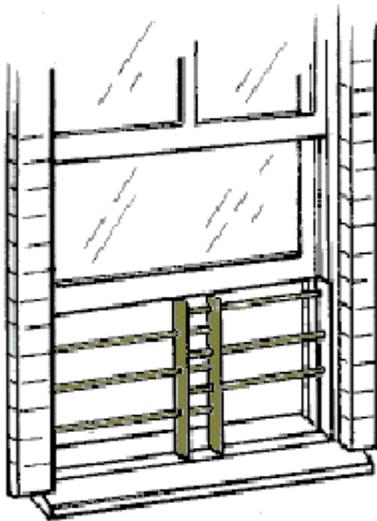


WINDOW GUARDS

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that each year more than 4,000 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries received from falling from a window. The CPSC knows of at least 120 window-fall related deaths of children since 1990. Most of the injuries and deaths were to children under the age of five. On June 21, 2000, the CPSC announced new safety standards for window guards to help protect children from falls, while ensuring that the guards do not prevent escape from a fire.



In St. Louis, the four-year-old son of a tenant of the **city housing authority** fell eleven floors to his death because failure to replace the window guard specifically designed to prevent such falls. The jury verdict was **\$18 million** - \$800,000 against the city housing authority and the balance against the property management company.

How do window guards work?

Window guards screw into the sides of the window frame. They need to be screwed securely into the window frame because guards that are simply spring-loaded can be easily dislodged by a child. Window guards should also have bars no more than 4 inches (10 cm) apart to keep a child from getting between the bars and falling out the window. Window guards generally cost between \$10 and \$30.

What about window stops?

Window stops are also very useful as a safety device. Some new windows today come with window stops already installed to prevent the windows from opening more than 4 inches (10 cm). (That's the maximum distance permitted between the bars in a window guard.) If your windows don't already have stops, you can easily add them to the window frame. Window stops generally cost about \$2.

The CPSC issued the following guidelines to assist in the purchase and maintenance of window guards:

- Install window guards to prevent children from falling out of windows
- For windows on the sixth floor and below, install window guards that adults and older children can open easily in case of fire
- For windows on the seventh floor and above, install window guards but the guards can be permanent ones
- Install window guards in the children's and parents' bedrooms, and any other rooms where young children spend time
- If you are in doubt about whether to put a guard in a particular window, go ahead and install a window guard there
- In lieu of guards, you can install window stops that permit windows to open no more than 4 inches (10 cm)
- Whenever possible, open windows from the top, instead of the bottom. It is safer
- Do not place furniture under or near a window to avoid giving children a way to climb directly to the window
- NEVER depend on screens to keep a child from falling out of a window

You can see photographs of a recommended type of window guard and also view a video clip about window guards on the CPSC site at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml00/00126.html>.

For further assistance on this matter or other safety and risk control issues, contact your risk management consultant or Jim Rhoads, NJPHA-JIF safety consultant (610-397-5061).

IMPORTANT NOTICE - *The information and suggestions presented by PMA Companies in this risk control technical guide are for your consideration in your loss prevention efforts. They are not intended to be complete or definitive in identifying all hazards associated with your business, preventing workplace accidents, or complying with any safety related or other laws or regulations. You are encouraged to alter the information and suggestions to fit the specific hazards of your business and to have your legal counsel review all of your plans and company policies.*