

Historic Safety Standard to Eliminate Majority of Corded Window Coverings from U.S. Market Takes Effect

New York, NY (December 13, 2018) – A vast majority of window covering products sold in the United States will be cordless or have inaccessible or short cords, as a result of a new safety standard that goes into effect on December 15, 2018. This new requirement applies to stock products, sold in stores and online, which accounts for **more than 80 percent of all window covering products sold in the U.S.** The new standard also adds requirements for corded custom window products as well. Corded window coverings can pose a strangulation hazard to infants and children and are one of the “top five hidden hazards in American homes,” according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The Window Covering Manufacturers Association (WCMA) coordinated the two-year effort to update the safety standard, ANSI/WCMA A100.1-2018, under the auspices of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), working closely with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the window covering industry and consumer groups.

“The standard’s new requirements segments the market into custom and stock, and requires all stock products, sold in stores and online, to be cordless or have inaccessible or short cords,” said WCMA Executive Director Ralph Vasami. “Stock products account for more than 80 percent of all window covering products sold in the U.S. and CPSC incident data shows that requiring these products to be cordless or have inaccessible cords would have the most significant and immediate impact on reducing the strangulation risk to young children from certain window covering cords.”

“The new standard is the result of years of collaboration among WCMA, industry, the safety community and CPSC. It will have a significant impact on reducing the strangulation risk that corded window coverings pose to young children,” said Acting Chairman Ann Marie Buerkle.

“I look forward to the industry’s compliance with the standard. I also appreciate WCMA’s agreement to begin addressing the remaining hazards associated with corded custom window coverings by convening the first meeting of stakeholders to discuss the issues on January 23, 2019,” Buerkle added.

Corded window coverings will only be available on custom-order products, as corded products are still needed by a wide range of consumers, including the elderly and those with disabilities, those short in stature, and those with windows in hard-to-reach locations. The revised standard imposes new restrictions on these custom-order products such as requiring operating cords to have a default length of 40% of the blind height [currently it is unlimited] and a default to a tilt wand instead of a tilt cord.

WCMA member Hunter Douglas stated, "Hunter Douglas is proud to have worked with the Window Covering Manufacturers Association and all of the stakeholders who participated in the standard-making process for this important initiative. Hunter Douglas fully supports the new safety standard and is committed to continuing to lead the way in the development of innovative new products with safety, convenience, and beauty in mind."

WCMA member Springs Window Fashions stated, "The new WCMA/ANSI corded window covering standard is a significant achievement and Springs Window Fashions is proud to have played a leadership role in its development. Springs fully supports the new safety standard, and has revised our product designs to meet or exceed these new standards."

WCMA set the compliance date for the new standard to December 15, 2018 at the request of CPSC Chairman Ann Marie Buerkle. All products manufactured after December 15 should comply with the new standard, although many manufacturers have already introduced new products based on the new standard since the standard was approved in January of this year.

The new safety standard is a direct result of ongoing industry innovation, technological advances and new product development.

"Because many custom-order window coverings are available with cordless operating systems or have inaccessible cords, we estimate that as much as 90 percent of products sold in the U.S. will be cordless or have inaccessible cords once compliance with the new safety standard is in place," said Vasami. Vasami also called on the Canadian government to halt the development of its new window covering safety regulation and immediately reengage in efforts to harmonize the Canadian and U.S. corded window covering standards.

"The new US ANSI window covering safety standard is by far the strongest safety standard in the world," said Vasami. "The Canadian government should update the current Canadian standard to harmonize it with the new U.S. safety standard that is already referenced in the existing Canadian Corded Window Covering Products Regulations."

A [detailed FAQ](#) provides more detail into this milestone.

Consumers today can continue look for the "[Best for Kids](#)" certification label to identify cordless window covering options. WCMA created the "Best for Kids" certification program in 2015 to make it easier for consumers shopping for window coverings to identify cordless products.

For consumers who may still have corded blinds, the [Window Covering Safety Council](#) and the CPSC urges replacing the corded blinds in homes where children live or visit, and offers [safety tips](#) such as keeping cribs, beds and furniture away from window blinds.

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About WCMA

Organized in the 1950s as the Venetian Blind Council, the Window Covering Manufacturers Association (WCMA) represents the interests of the window covering industry manufacturers, fabricators and assemblers. Industry products include blinds, shades, shutters, curtains, curtain rods, drapes, drapery hardware and other window treatments. Visit us on the web at www.wcmanet.org