

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

BS EN13120:2009+A1:2014

New standards on window blind safety are backed by Tropical Blinds

Dear Customer

New standards have been introduced which affect the manufacturing and installation of all new internal blinds in homes, public buildings and commercial buildings. All blinds intended to be installed where children between the age of 0-42 months are likely to have access or be present, are affected.

Homes - It is important to note that blinds installed in a home must be safe by design or comply with the new standards – regardless of whether or not children between the age of 0 and 42 months currently reside at or visit the premises.

Public buildings are taken to be any premises open to the public whether they are publicly or privately owned or operated. Examples are; shops, libraries, hospitals, schools, theatres, hotels etc.

Compliant products must be installed at the very least in the publicly accessible areas of these buildings. However, as they are public buildings, children could feasibly go anywhere and the recommendation is that compliant products should be installed everywhere. A risk assessment should be completed to establish whether or not compliant products are required.

Commercial buildings are taken to be premises where the public are typically not admitted such as offices, factories, laboratories and the like. In these situations child safety compliance would be determined by a risk assessment of the premises. It may be that certain areas of the building will require compliance, perhaps a reception area, whereas other areas may not.

You will invariably not know whether children will be present or not in a commercial building. We therefore suggest that you ask your client to complete a pro-forma risk assessment which will inform you whether you have to provide internal blinds which are compliant with child safety standards.

Please remember, as a professional supplier or installer of blinds you are bound by the mandatory requirements of BS EN 13120:2009+A1:2014, however, the building owner or user is not. The legal responsibility for compliance lies with you as the supplier and/or installer.

Tropical Blinds have welcomed the new requirements on window blind safety since they came into effect on 28th February 2014. We are a member of the British Blind & Shutter Association (BBSA), which has campaigned for safer blinds and has worked with UK government and EU standards bodies to make child safety standards for new window blinds much more stringent.

Tragically there have been a number of accidents where children have become entangled in window blind cords. Although thankfully rare, the EU has revised the standard governing window blinds to ensure child safety measures are always provided.

As an accredited member of the BBSA we have been closely involved in the Make It Safe campaign and the changes required in the way internal blinds are made, sold and professionally installed. The new regulations place a legal responsibility on all suppliers and professional installers to:

- Provide safety devices to reduce the risk of any cords or chains forming a hazardous loop
- Test all safety critical items of internal blinds
- Test blinds using safety devices
- Observe maximum cord and chain lengths
- Provide specific warnings and instructions
- Provide information on packaging and at point of sale
- Fit safety devices when professionally installing blinds

If you require blinds that have operating cords or chains please note the new regulations will mean cord and chain lengths are determined by the European standard (please see table below), and where a safety device is needed you will have to install the device, by law.

Installation Height	Cord/Chain Length
Operating Loop - Breakaway System	
Known	Distance from floor to bottom of cord/chain shall be at least 600mm
Not Known	Less than or equal to 2/3 of the drop of the blind
Operating Loop - Fixed Tensioning System	
Known	Distance from floor to bottom of cord/chain shall be at least 1500mm
Not Known but Blind Drop up to 2500mm	Less than or equal to 1000mm
Not Known but Blind Drop greater than 2500mm	Less than or equal to BLIND DROP minus 1500mm
Pull Cords - with Accumulation Device	
Known	Distance from floor to bottom of cord/chain shall be at least 1500mm
Not Known but Blind Drop up to 2500mm	Less than or equal to 1000mm
Not Known but Blind Drop greater than 2500mm	Less than or equal to BLIND DROP minus 1500mm

Please note that a surveyor or installer will always know the installation height. It is important that the installation height is given when ordering a blind otherwise we will have to follow the 'Not Known' rules. However, upon installation, the installer is legally required to follow the 'Known' rules. Therefore, to avoid having to make onsite adjustments to blinds, please always state the installation height when ordering blinds.

It is illegal to sell or professionally install a window blind that does not meet the standards. Tropical Blinds fully support these changes to the EU standard. Our internal blinds are fully compliant with the new standards for internal window blinds. Compliance certification is available upon request.

We also offer an extensive range of products that are safe by design, meaning that they do not use operating cords or chains or have concealed or tensioned cords. We strongly recommend that these products are always considered first when you are buying new blinds for homes or public buildings.

The British Blind and Shutter Association have helped spearhead the drive towards safer window blinds in the UK. Their Make It Safe campaign is supported and endorsed by The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and the Child Accident Prevent Trust (CAPT) and referenced by many other organisations. The Make It Safe website offers a lot of advice and information about child safety in relation to window blinds, and can be found at www.makeitsafe.org.uk

Yours faithfully

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