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### **BAN TO REIN IN CURTAIN & BLIND CORD INJURIES**

The safety of South Australian children is at the heart of a new SA Government ban hoped to minimise death and injury from unsafe blind and curtain cords.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gail Gago today announced the ban, effective from 27<sup>th</sup> January, which restricts the sale and supply of curtains and blinds with looped cords unless a safety device is included – or the cords are at least 160cm from the base of the window furnishing.

Safety devices can include an enclosed cord-tensioning wheel or two-pronged hook (cleat) for fastening tight against a wall.

A warning sticker and swing tag must also be attached to all blinds and curtains to alert consumers of the potential dangers and safe installation and use of the product.

“Any installer, whether professional or the homeowner/handyman, needs to ensure that any cord fastenings are installed in a safe manner, so there’s no loose loops,” says Minister Gago.

“Blind cords can be deadly if they loop around a child’s neck and we all need to be alert to the potential dangers to avoid unnecessary injuries.

“SA has already experienced a terrible tragedy with the accidental death of a toddler who became entangled in a looped blind cord near his cot the subject of a coronial inquest last month.

“The Government wants to minimise the risk of such tragedy. We can improve safety of devices sold, but ultimately matters like these come down to user responsibility.

“Residents need to ensure these are not only installed correctly, but put to good use, securing cords firmly to walls at least 160cm above the bottom of the curtain or blind.

“Parents, grandparents and carers are also urged to ensure the bottom of any previously installed blind cords are as far out of a child’s reach as possible.

“This can be improved with the purchase of a relatively inexpensive hook or cord tensioning wheel from a hardware store or curtain shop.

“While parental responsibility is paramount in these matters, I urge anyone not to position furniture near cords because accidents can occur when young children visit.

“It’s good to hear Child & Youth Health representatives specifically mention blind cord safety when offering guidance to parents of newborns at the Universal contact visits and offer to check sleeping arrangements. It’s also explicitly referred to in a magazine handout.”

Further information about blind and curtain safety is from the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs on [www.ocba.sa.gov.au](http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au) or by phoning (08) 8152 0732.

At least 10 Australian children have been accidentally strangled by blind or curtain cords since 2000 and 180 in the U.S. since 1991.