

# News Release

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**Hon Gail Gago**

Minister for State/Local Government  
Relations  
Minister for the Status of Women  
Minister for Consumer Affairs  
Minister Government Enterprises  
Minister Ast Minister for Transport, Infrastructure & Energy

Tuesday, 27 January 2009

## **BLIND CORD WARNING AS BAN TAKES EFFECT**

South Australian's are being reminded about the simple low cost measures householders can take to minimise the dangers of looped blind cords in their homes.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gail Gago says the awareness push follows a coronial recommendation last month for improved awareness of the risks and implementation of a safety standard. It follows the death of a South Australian toddler strangled by a blind cord above his cot.

“Residents should check all of their blinds and curtains to ensure cords are fastened tightly against walls with a two pronged hook or tensioning wheel - unless the cords already hang well out of reach of children. That is recommended to be 160cm above the bottom of the window furnishing,” says the Minister.

“These safety devices can be purchased at low cost from hardware and blind outlets and it’s a small price to pay to enhance the safety of your family and visitors.”

The warning coincides with today’s start of a ban that requires new curtains and blinds to be sold or supplied with similar safety devices and labelling.

“Responsible blind and curtain outlets are welcoming SA’s safety enhancements and many carry stock that already complies because it’s manufactured to meet the same standard interstate,” says the Minister.

“Nevertheless the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs will have product safety officers out educating sellers in curtain, blind, hardware and variety stores over coming weeks. Warnings will be issued if necessary and longer-term breaches could be subject to fines of up to \$10,000.

“Parents and carers of young children should remember to put these safety devices to good use and keep cots, high chairs and other baby furniture away from blind cords. Parents also need to check that other household furniture doesn’t provide a climbing route for young children to access cords.

“By following the simple measures outlined in the new standard, we can help to prevent tragic and avoidable deaths of babies and toddlers.”

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

For more information or advice contact the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) on (08) 8152 0732 or 131 882 for country callers or visit [www.ocba.sa.gov.au](http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au)



Government  
of South Australia

The Minister for Consumer Affairs is issuing the following public warning and requests that your organisation assist the community by giving prominent attention to the important consumer advice detailed below.

# PUBLIC WARNING

## Preventing infant deaths

South Australians are warned about the potential dangers of looped blind and curtain cords in the home and are urged to take simple steps to reduce the risk of toddlers becoming strangled.

A recent Coronial Inquiry recommended greater awareness of the dangers and the introduction of a mandatory safety standard.

### **Safety tips for existing blinds and curtains in the home**

Ensure that:

- Looped cords are fastened tightly against walls with a two pronged hook or cord tensioning device. The end of looped cords must not be within 1.6 metres from the floor.
- Furniture – including cots, beds and high chairs – are placed well away from curtain or blind cords. Remove any climbing hazards.

### **Mandatory safety requirements for sale or supply of blinds and curtains *Section 25 Trade Standards Act 1979***

New mandatory safety requirements for traders who supply corded internal window coverings are now in force.

They require most blinds, shades, rods and tracks incorporating a looped cord or chain to be sold with safety devices and warning labels.

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