



Tuesday, 8th December 2009

SAFETY AUTHORITIES WARN CONSUMERS OF BLIND CORD DANGER

Consumers are being advised to keep looped blind and curtain cords out of reach of young children to prevent strangulation.

State and territory fair trading offices are joining together for a national campaign, led by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, to raise public awareness of the serious risks of looped cords on curtains and blinds.

SAs Minister for Consumer Affairs Gail Gago says, "Parents and carers are being alerted to some simple precautions that can be taken to prevent strangulation from cords left hanging around the home."

Under a safety ban introduced by South Australia in January this year, new curtains and blinds with looped cords cannot be supplied here unless they meet safety requirements. The ban followed a Coronial Inquiry into the death of a South Australian toddler after he became entangled in the loop of a blind cord while in his cot.

Minister Gago said that parents, grandparents and carers with existing blind and curtains in their home need to check that looped cords cannot be accessed by young children, to prevent further deaths.

"My message to consumers is that if young children live in or visit your home, then you need to check that blind or curtain cords are kept well out of reach."

Advice to consumers:

- If possible cut the cord to eliminate the loop and install end tassels;
- Looped cords should be fastened tightly against walls using a cord-tensioning device or cord pulley. A two-pronged cleat could be used to tie down cords, as long as consumers always remember to use it;
- Ensure cots, highchairs, and any climbing hazards are placed well away from looped curtain or blind cords.

"I cannot stress enough the importance of this issue," Ms Gago said.

"Infant deaths as a result of unsafe blind and curtain cords are entirely preventable and it's a matter of raising awareness of the hazards."

For more information on blind and curtain cord safety consumers can contact OCBA on 8152 0732 or 131 882 for regional callers, or visit the website at www.ocba.sa.gov.au