Window Safety for Kids

A friendly, practical guide to preventing window falls, from window stops and guards to furniture placement, why screens aren't safety devices, and keeping windows ready for emergency escape.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We wrote this guide for families, caregivers and the owners who rent to them, because window falls happen in seconds, often on a warm day with a window open for a breeze. A few simple steps protect little ones while keeping windows ready as an escape route in a fire. If anything here is unclear, we would genuinely love to help.

This guide shares general information to help you, and is not legal, medical or child-safety advice. Please follow local codes and the maker's instructions for window stops and guards. Bunklow does not install safety devices.

Over the years, we have walked through a great many homes with young children, and we have learned how quickly a curious toddler can climb: a toy box under a window, a couch pushed against the sill, a bed right beside an open window on a summer night. Children don't see the danger, so we have to see it for them.

The good news is that window falls are very preventable. This guide walks through window stops and guards, furniture placement, why screens don't stop falls, supervising play near windows, balconies, and keeping windows usable for fire escape. We hope it helps every family open their windows with peace of mind.

FOUR SIMPLE RULES

1 Screens don't stop falls
Screens keep bugs out. They are not strong enough to keep a child in.

2 Limit the opening
Window stops that keep windows from opening more than about four inches help prevent falls.

3 Move climbable furniture
Keep beds, cribs, couches and toy boxes away from windows.

4 Keep escape in mind
Window guards and stops should release quickly for an adult in a fire.

KEEPING LITTLE ONES SAFE

SIMPLE WINDOW SAFETY HABITS

- Ask the owner about window stops or guards, especially on upper floors.
- Open windows from the top, if they are double-hung, so children can't reach the opening.
- Move cribs, beds, couches, chairs and toy boxes away from windows.
- Supervise children near open windows and on balconies.
- Teach children that windows are not for leaning, climbing or playing.
- Practice your fire escape plan, and show adults how to release window stops quickly.
- Share broken latches, loose guards or damaged windows in writing.

Window screens don't stop falls.

PLEASE BE CAREFUL WITH THESE

- Please don't rely on window screens to keep a child from falling.
- Please don't install guards or stops that screw into frames without the owner's permission.
- Please don't block or permanently lock windows that are needed for escape.
- Please don't leave furniture on balconies that children could climb.

BUNKLY'S FIELD TIP

Walk each room at a toddler's eye level. Anything a child could climb on that sits within reach of a window should be moved across the room.

IF A CHILD FALLS

1. Stay calm. Call 911 right away if a child falls from a window.
2. Don't move the child unless they are in immediate danger, and follow the dispatcher's directions.
3. Stay with the child until help arrives.
4. Once everyone is safe, close and secure the window.
5. Let the owner or manager know in writing what happened and what needs attention.
6. Please be gentle with yourself. Reaching out for support afterward is a sign of strength.

BUNKLY'S FIELD TIP

Show every adult and older child in the home how to release window stops quickly. In a fire, a window that won't open is a wall.

FOR OWNERS

BEFORE A FAMILY MOVES IN

- Check every window for working latches, sturdy frames and smooth operation.
- Install window stops or guards that meet local codes, especially above the first floor.
- Make sure guards on escape windows have quick-release features adults can use.
- Learn any local rules requiring window guards in homes with young children.
- Check balcony railings for height, gaps and anything climbable.

DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOWS

On windows that slide up and down, opening the top sash instead of the bottom keeps the opening out of a child's reach.

WHEN A FAMILY ASKS FOR WINDOW SAFETY

- Thank the family, and treat window safety requests as a priority.
- Install approved stops or guards, or approve the family installing them.
- Repair broken latches, loose screens and damaged frames promptly.
- Explain how to release guards or stops in an emergency, in writing.
- Write down what was requested, what was done and when, and follow up kindly to make sure all is well.

A QUICK WINDOW SAFETY CHECK

Windows open no more than about four inches where young children live, or have approved guards in place.

No furniture under windows, screens in good repair, latches working, and every escape window opens easily for an adult.

BUNKLY'S FIELD TIP

Window stops are inexpensive and quick to install at turnover. Keeping a box on hand makes it easy to say yes when a family asks.

COMMON MYTHS, GENTLY CORRECTED

"A screen will catch a child."

Screens pop out easily under a child's weight. They are not safety devices.

"Falls only happen from tall buildings."

Serious falls can happen from second-story and even first-floor windows.

"Locking windows is the safest choice."

Windows are escape routes in a fire. Stops and guards should release quickly.

"My child knows not to climb."

Curious young children climb quickly. Supervision and stops work together.

BUNK BEDS

Keep bunk beds and lofted beds well away from windows. Children often climb to the top bunk and lean.

Window stops limit openings to about four inches.

SAFETY, HEALTH AND THE LAW

Window falls can cause serious injuries to young children. If a child falls, call 911 right away. Many communities and safety organizations share free window safety tips, and talking with your child's doctor about home safety is always welcome.

Rules about window guards, window stops, fire escape windows and who installs them differ from place to place, and some cities require window guards in homes with young children. We would gently encourage a quick look at the rules where your home is, and if you are ever unsure, a local landlord or tenant association or an attorney in your area will be glad to help.

CHECK EVERY WINDOW AT MOVE-IN

Your move-in walk is the perfect time to open and close every window, check latches and screens, and note where furniture can safely go. Please give every single item a comment, in any condition, with photos. Bunklow Walk and our free move-in condition report were made for exactly this.

A FEW MORE HELPFUL HABITS

BALCONIES

Keep chairs, planters and toys away from balcony railings. Children can use them as steps.

BLIND CORDS TOO

Near windows, corded blinds can also be a strangulation risk for young children. Cordless options are safer.

Move cribs and beds away from windows.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- Safe Kids Worldwide: Home Safety
- U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission: Anchor It!

We hope this guide helps every family enjoy fresh air with peace of mind. Thank you so much for taking the time to read it. If there is anything we can do to help, we would truly love to hear from you.

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