

Child Safety Requirements for Internal Blinds EN13120

The new regulation for child safety requirements for internal blinds is almost upon us.

DO NOT PANIC, the regulations are awkward in some cases but still possible to comply with. In the main, the regulations concern themselves with:

Making safe the operating chain or cord.

Making safe the accessible inner cords behind the blinds.

Safety documentation that must accompany the blind to the consumer.

Merrick & Day will be supplying compliant Roman Blind headrail systems, the necessary warning labels and the necessary safety devices.

The safety requirements have been passed as a standard in Europe and are covered by the European Standard EN13120. This is a précis of the regulations as we understand it, at this time, in as simple a form as possible. We believe the act might be operative from the 31st March 2014 and applies to all blinds made after that date but at this stage nobody seems to be sure. You must ensure that you acquaint yourself with the act when it becomes available.

Technical stuff

Apart from European Standard EN13120 There are two other European documents that apply EN16433 and EN16434, they refer to the testing of the blind components and to make sure they meet the European standard and are more concerned with manufacturers rather than curtain-makers.

This is intended as a guide only to the forthcoming regulations as understood by Merrick & Day Ltd at this time, in order to reassure our customers that they will be able to continue their business, subject to compliance, when the law is finally published. We accept no responsibility for any subsequent changes in regulation and/or our misunderstanding of the proposals as they stand.

To avoid any confusion when reading this, three specific definitions need to be understood;

1. "Cord(s)" are used throughout the standards to mean cord(s) chain(s), ball-chain(s), tape(s) and similar.
2. A "curtain" is part of the product which is set in motion by the operating mechanism and ensures it's function so in effect it is the moving part of the blind and not a curtain as in a drapery product.
3. Any text shown in speech marks is a verbatim quote from the standard.

Where the act applies

The act will apply to all internal blinds presenting hazardous loops and hazardous cords where they are “intended” to be installed in premises where children aged 0-42 months are likely to have access or be present. The act does not apply to offices, factories etc. where children are unlikely to have access. In this case a notice with the following text “product intended to be installed in premises where children are not likely to have access” shall accompany the internal blind.

If you do not know where the blinds are going to be installed you must assume they will be used where children will be present. It is also recommended that if children up to 42 months will have access then consideration should be given to installing a window treatment without operating cords.

Where the safety regulations apply, the following instructions MUST be observed.

General construction of internal blinds

“Special attention shall be paid by the manufacturer of internal blinds to ensure there are no parts which can cause harm to the individual.

Sharp and projecting edges of any moving parts and parts related to the child safety eg. Safety devices of the internal blind likely to be located to a height lower than 2.5m above the floor or any permanent access level, shall be rounded with a minimum radius of 0.5mm. Bottom rail end plugs shall have a minimum of 0.5mm radius, or edged, or protected by foam or rubber.”

Blinds with an operating chain loop

Installation Height	Cord or Chain Length		European Directive Number
Operating loop with Breakaway System			EN 13120
Known	Distance from floor to bottom of pull cords shall be at least 0.6m	“In either instance the hazardous loop shall be eliminated when a mass of 6 kg is applied to the pull cord(s) gradually or within 5 seconds of application”	
Not Known	Less than or equal to 2/3 drop of blind		
Operating loop with Fixed Tensioning System			EN 13120
Known	Distance from floor to bottom of pull cords shall be at least 1.5m	“The distance between the two strands of the loop shall not be more than 50mm at the point of exit from the fixed tensioning device”	
Not Known Drop less than or equal to 2.5m	Length of pull cords shall be less than or equal to 1m		
Not Known Drop less than 2.5m	Shall be less than or equal to drop of blind minus 1.5m		

Blinds with an operating pull cord(s)

Blinds with pull cord(s) cannot be fitted below 1.5 metres from the floor.

Installation Height	Cord Length		Accumulation Device	European Directive Number
Pull Cord(s) - NB this covers single cords as well				EN 13120
Known	Distance from floor to bottom of pull cords shall be at least 1.5m	<p>2 Pull cords: Cords shall not tangle, if they do the loop must be eliminated under mass of 6 kg within 5 seconds OR Pull cords connected to breakaway system (condenser) which eliminates hazardous loop under 6kg within 5 seconds</p> <p>More than 2 Pull cords: Pull cords connected to breakaway system (condenser) which eliminates hazardous loop under 6kg within 5 seconds</p> <p>More than 4 Pull cords: In absence of a suitable breakaway connector it is accepted that the cords may be connected to a single pull cord on condition the connector is positioned at less than 50mm from the headrail where the internal blind is in fully extended position</p>	<p>Unless at all positions of the blind the cords are as described in the cord length column of this table (which is highly unlikely!) An accumulation system shall be supplied so that pull cords can be stored out of reach of children. The accumulation system shall be designed so that:</p> <p>1. "The complete length of pull cord(s) can be accumulated and maintained when the internal blind is in the fully retracted position"</p> <p>2. "No more than 100mm of cord(s) is released after a force of 60 N is applied to any of the cord(s) on either side of the accumulation device, the curtain being in the fully retracted position"</p>	
Not Known Drop more than or equal to 2.5m	Length of pull cords shall be more than or equal to 1m			
Not Known Drop less than 2.5m	Shall be less than or equal to drop of blind minus 1.5m			

Accessible Inner Cords

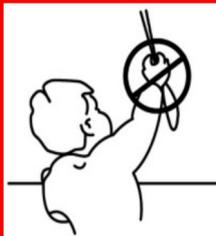
If inner cords are accessible	European Directive Number
a) The maximum distance between two consecutive attachment/retention points of inner cords shall be less than or equal to 200mm	EN 16433
b) It shall not be possible to insert the head probe defined in EN 16433 after having applied a vertical force of 50N	
If either a) or b) is not fulfilled, the hazardous loop shall be eliminated when a mass of 6kg is applied within 5 seconds of application using a breakaway device.	

Mandatory Warning Labels

General Warning Notice	Warning on packaging intended for consumer	Inner cord warning notice
------------------------	--	---------------------------

WARNING

Young children can be strangled by loops in pull cords, chains, tapes and inner cord that operate the product.



To avoid strangulation and entanglement, keep cords out of the reach of young children. Cords may become wrapped around a child's neck. Move beds, cots and furniture away from window covering cords.

Do not tie cords together. Make sure cords do not twist and create a loop.

Must be included with all blinds with or without integral safety device.

WARNING

Young children can be strangled by loops in pull cords, chains, tapes and inner cords that operate the product.

To avoid strangulation and entanglement, keep cords out of the reach of young children. Cords may become wrapped around a child's neck. Move beds, cots and furniture away from window covering cords.

Do not tie cords together. Make sure cords do not twist and create a loop.

Must be on packaging of any blind intended for consumers

Children can strangle if this safety device is not installed and adjusted. Read carefully the instructions and install accordingly.

Must be included on blinds with inner cords if supplied as a stock blind. (not made to measure)

Non-integral Loop Tensioner & Accumulation Device Warning notice

Children can strangle if this safety device is not installed. Always use this device to keep cords or chains out of reach of children.

Must be included with all blinds with non-integral safety device

Instruction Requirements

All blinds must contain printed product instructions.

The name or trademark of the manufacturer or importer or distributor must be displayed on the blind.