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# Window Covering Manufacturers Association Announces Historic New Window Covering Safety Standard

🕒 January 25, 2018 📄 News (<https://windowcoverings.org/category/news/>)

**New York, NY (UPDATED January 25, 2018)**—The Window Covering Manufacturers Association (<http://www.wcmanet.org/>) (WCMA) announced today the approval of a new window covering safety standard by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) that will require a vast majority of window covering products sold in the United States and Canada to be cordless or have inaccessible or short cords. The new safety standard, ANSI/WCMA A100.1-2018, strengthens window-covering safety by requiring that all stock products sold in stores and online—which account for more than 80 percent of all window covering products sold in the U.S. and Canada—to be cordless or have inaccessible cords.

WCMA previously announced that the compliance date for the new standard would be one year after ANSI approval, which would be January 9, 2019. However, at the request of CPSC Chairman, Ann Marie Buerkle, who asked WCMA to move up the compliance date, WCMA is advising all companies manufacturing window covering products in the U.S. and Canada that the compliance date of the new standard is December 15, 2018. This means that all products manufactured after this date must comply with the new standard, although many manufacturers will likely begin introducing new products based on the new standard earlier in the year.

“The revised safety standard segments the market between stock and custom-made products because U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) incident data shows that requiring stock products to be cordless or have inaccessible cords would have the most significant and immediate impact on reducing the strangulation risk to young children from certain window covering cords,” said WCMA Executive Director, Ralph Vasami.

Corded window coverings will only be available on custom-order products, as corded products are still needed by a wide range of consumers, including the elderly and those with disabilities, those short in stature, and those with windows in hard-to-reach locations. The revised standard imposes new restrictions on these custom-order products such as requiring operating cords to have a default length of 40% of the blind height [currently it is unlimited] and a default to a tilt wand instead of a tilt cord. The new safety standard also includes a change in warning tags to more graphically depict the strangulation hazard.

Many custom-order window coverings are also now available with cordless operating systems or have inaccessible cords. It is therefore likely that more than 90 percent of products sold in the U.S. and Canada will be cordless or have inaccessible cords once compliance with the new safety standard is in place.

“All companies who manufacture, distribute, or sell window coverings in the U.S. must comply with the voluntary safety standard or face enforcement action by the CPSC and/or be open to legal action if non-compliant products are sold,” said Vasami. “‘Voluntary’ simply signifies that industry worked cooperatively with the CPSC, safety experts, and others under the auspices of ANSI to develop the standard.”

The revised standard was updated in strict accordance with the internationally-respected American National Standards Institute (ANSI) process. ANSI requirements mandate an open and balanced process with public review opportunities. The 18 month process required assembling a consensus body (the canvass group), submitting the draft standard to the canvass group for ballot and comment, addressing the comments received, re-balloting, a public review period and then finally achieving approval of the standard.

“I congratulate WCMA member companies, CPSC officials, safety advocates, retailers and all stakeholders who devoted an incredible amount of time and effort over the past 18 months to develop the most significant revision to the window covering safety standard since 1996,” continued Vasami. “The new safety standard is a direct result of ongoing industry innovation, technological advances and new product development. However, our work is not done. WCMA is creating a task force this month to study what else can be done to further enhance safety on corded custom products.”

Vasami concluded, “I am hopeful that the Government of Canada will align Canadian window covering regulations with the new U.S. standard. A harmonized standard will result in further reductions in strangulation risks and decrease the possibility of confusion in the Canadian market.”

Consumers today can look for the “Best for Kids” (<https://windowcoverings.org/best-for-kids/>) certification label to identify cordless window covering options. WCMA created the “Best for Kids” certification program in 2015 to make it easier for consumers shopping for window coverings to identify cordless products.

***NOTE: This press release was updated on January 25, 2018 to further clarify that December 15, 2018 is the date that all manufacturers must comply with the standard. All products manufactured after this date must comply with the new standard, although many manufacturers will likely begin introducing new products based on the new standard earlier in the year.***

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#### **About WCMA**

*Organized in the 1950s as the Venetian Blind Council, the Window Covering Manufacturers Association (WCMA) represents the interests of the window covering industry manufacturers, fabricators and assemblers. Industry products include blinds, shades, shutters, curtains, curtain rods, drapes, drapery hardware and other window treatments. Visit us on the web at [www.wcmanet.org](http://www.wcmanet.org) (<http://www.wcmanet.org>)*