

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## ON THE NEW WINDOW COVERING SAFETY STANDARD

### **What does the new standard do?**

The new safety standard, ANSI/WCMA A100.1-2018, will ensure that a vast majority of window covering products sold in the United States and Canada will be cordless or have inaccessible or short cords 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. This approach is supported by a review of the hazard data that shows that a vast majority of incidents related to corded window coverings identified by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) take place on stock products.

### **What is a stock product?**

Most window covering products sold to consumers in retail stores or online are “stock” products, meaning that the products are completely or substantially fabricated in advance of being distributed in commerce. The SKU can either be sold “as is” or modified or adjusted by the seller, manufacturer, or distributor prior to being distributed in commerce in the U.S. and it would still be considered a stock blind, shade or shading product.

### **Why aren't custom products required to be cordless?**

At this time, cordless products do not meet all the needs and desires of all consumers, including the elderly and users with disabilities. As a result, manufacturers need to be able to sell corded products to satisfy the needs of these customers and to certain applications. When purchasing custom products, a consumer is required to interact with a salesperson, installation specialist or online information and warnings, which provides window covering safety information, specifically regarding the fact that consumers should not use corded products in homes with young children. It should also be noted that many cordless options already exist for custom products.

### **What are the other updates from the last version of the safety standard?**

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.

### **When will the new standard go into effect?**

The effective date of the new standard is December 15, 2018.

### **Because they are voluntary standards, does that mean compliance is not mandatory?**

No. All companies who manufacture, distribute or sell window coverings in the U.S. must comply with the voluntary safety standards or face enforcement action by the CPSC and/or be open to legal action if non-compliant products are sold. Almost all consumer products have voluntary rather than mandatory safety standards. “Voluntary” simply signifies that industry worked cooperatively with the CPSC, safety experts, and others under the auspices of ANSI to develop the standard.

### **What products are covered under the new standard?**

The standard applies to all types of window coverings sold or manufactured in the U.S. by all participants in the window coverings industry. How did the process for updating the safety standard work? 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.

### **Will there be more updates to the standard?**

Yes. WCMA is creating a task force this month to study what else can be done to further enhance safety on corded custom products.

### **What if I want to buy a cordless window covering now?**

There are many cordless options available to consumers now and they are easily identifiable by the ‘Best for Kids’ label. Consumers today can look for the “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.