

# Kids Can't Fly



## Window and balcony safety for children

Each year a number of children are admitted to hospital as a result of falling from a window or balcony. These falls often happen in the child's own home and can result in death or serious injury.

Children aged from one to five years are most at risk as they are naturally curious but lack the ability to recognise danger. Falls occur most often in the warmer months when families leave windows and doors to balconies open during the day and at night.

There are now legal requirements that apply to new buildings across Australia and strata buildings in NSW, designed to improve child safety.

### New buildings in Australia

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Since 1 May 2013, The Building Code of Australia (BCA) has stated that any openable bedroom windows in new residential buildings, with a fall of 2m or more to the surface below, require protection to prevent children falling through them. This also applies to all windows in child care centres.

The BCA states that a balustrade or barrier must be constructed if the exterior fall height is more than 2m. The minimum height of that balustrade or barrier from the floor beneath the opening is 86.5cm. The code also states that any opening in the barrier must not allow a 12.5cm sphere (round ball) to pass through it.

### Strata buildings in NSW

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By 13 March 2018, windows that have a fall of 2m or more to the surface below in strata buildings must have safety devices fitted to allow window openings to be locked at a maximum of 12.5cm.

The Strata Schemes Management Regulation 2010 (NSW) law applies to openable windows that have sills less than 1.7m above the inside floor and are more than 2m above the surface level outside. Devices must be able to withstand an outward force of 250N. (Check the label on your window device for this information.)



## Window safety

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Children can fall out of a window which is open more than 12.5cm, even when a flyscreen is fitted.

To prevent children falling from your windows, the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network recommends:

- that all windows, especially bedroom windows:
  - be opened no more than 12.5cm when located above the ground floor.
  - have window latches/locks fitted to stop windows opening more than 12.5cm or guards to protect the opening (see Kids Can't Fly Window Safety Product Guide).
- open from the top
- are not near beds and other furniture that children can use them to climb up to the windows.

### Also:

- Do not rely on flyscreens to prevent a child falling out of a window
- Children are always supervised
- Children are taught to play away from windows

## Balcony safety

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To prevent children falling from your balcony, the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network recommends:

- that balustrades (railings):
  - be at least 1m high.
  - vertical bars be no more than 10cm apart (use a ruler to measure the gaps between your vertical balustrade posts).
  - have no horizontal or near horizontal elements that would allow children to climb.

### Also:

- Keep all furniture, pot plants and other climbable objects away from the edges of balconies.
- Secure any furniture that is light enough for children to drag to the balcony edge.
- Always supervise children on balconies.
- Keep doors leading to balconies closed to prevent child access to them.