

CEN child safety presentation Dec 2

EN 13120 is a European standard that summarises performance criteria for internal window blinds . The standard was introduced in January 2009 and is now under revision.

In 2004 CEN became aware of the United Kingdom's concerns regarding child safety issues associated with strangulation of young children and window blind cords. At the request of the UK representative, Ken Powell , a Child Safety section was introduced into the standard which required suppliers to comply with a number of child safety practices . This standard became fully active in January 2009 and continues today.

Over recent years the occurrence of tragic accidents where young children – typically between the ages of 1 and 3 years - have died has become more frequent ; the majority of such accidents have been seen in the UK and more recently Eire. In these countries domestic window blind use is far more common than Continental Europe .

In addition reports of similar tragedies in the USA , Canada and Australia have resulted in a belief that we need to work together to create harmonious product requirements to make blinds even more safe.

Work to create the next revision of EN 13120 was initiated in early 2009. Subsequent to this a significant amount of work has been done by individuals from Industry and the Commission to better understand the issues and drive forward a standard that delivers solutions. The proposed changes to the child safety element of EN 132120 will result in a much more detailed appraisal of the child safety issue including full definitions of the areas of concern and the appropriate child safety devices ,or methods required, to keep children safe. Work has already been done and will continue over the months ahead to discuss and agree key criteria and associated test methods

to ensure that child safety devices work to recognised and approved performance requirements .

It also has to be stated that the window covering industry itself has not been idle in identifying and introducing modifications to existing products which apply greater even safety performance than before . Also new products have been invented which do not feature accessible cords and are to all intents and purposes child safe. The industry will not stop reviewing child safety performance of their products –innovation can and will save lives.

The BBSA , British Blind and Shutter Association has also been very active in promoting window blind cord child safety awareness through a campaign they started called “ make it safe” . This campaign is focused on increasing consumer and industry awareness and compliance with the child safety requirements of EN 13120 is now mandatory for a member of BBSA . The BBSA has also financed and produced a DVD to highlight the issues regarding child safety and feature products currently available that help keep young children safe . This video is being made available to all appropriate organisations to include on their web site to help increase consumer awareness regarding this issue and the solutions currently available .