

# Window safety device requirements

## In strata schemes

To prevent children falling from windows, all strata buildings in NSW must be fitted with devices that enable their windows to be locked at 12.5cm when the devices are engaged. Owners corporations must have devices installed on all common property windows above the ground floor by 13 March 2018. The safety devices must be robust and childproof.

Residents will still be able to open their windows. However, they will have the security of knowing that when the locks are engaged, children will be protected.

**Did you know?** Similar laws in New York resulted in a 96 per cent decrease in hospitalisations due to falls from windows.

## Are there any alternatives to locks?

The alternative is security screens, such as bars or grills on the windows so long as they have gaps no bigger than 12.5cm. Flyscreens do not comply unless they are the reinforced security type and capable of resisting the very strong outward pressure which would prevent a child falling through.

For a handy window safety product guide, visit the Kids Don't Fly page on the Kids Health website at [www.kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au). Information is provided in 11 languages.

## Which windows does this apply to?

The laws apply to openable windows more than 2m above the ground floor outside and within a child's reach (less than 1.7m above the inside floor) – see the diagram below.

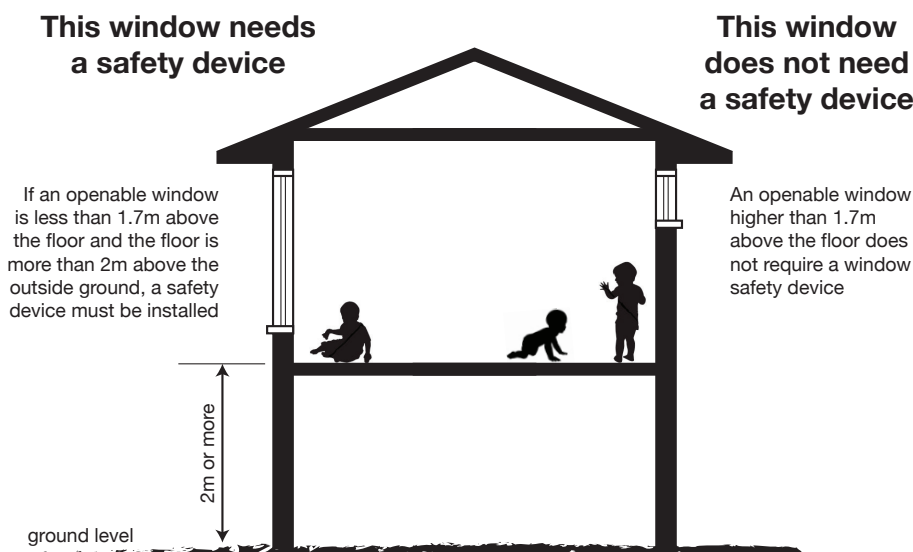
The details are explained in the Strata Schemes Management Regulation 2010.

## When do the locks need to be installed?

If the window safety requirements are not met by 13 March 2018, owners corporations face fines. Leaving it to the last minute places your scheme at risk of not complying by the due date and leaves young children vulnerable to falls from windows in your scheme.

Lot owners may install a window safety device in their property at any time, letting the owners corporation know. Tenants must get written permission from their landlord before installing locks that require drilling. Landlords cannot refuse a tenant's request unless they have a very good reason.

Watch our 'Window locks and your rights' video for details on your rights and obligations as a tenant, landlord or strata owner when it comes to installing locks, available from our website and YouTube channel.



## Will this mean the windows will never be able to open?

No. A window lock that allows the window to be fully opened, fully closed and also locked at 12.5cm complies with the legislation. When children are in the apartment, or on all common access areas such as stair landings, it makes sense to engage the locks at 12.5cm or less at all times to prevent falls.

## How can we arrange for locks in our scheme that won't cost a fortune?

Window safety devices can be easy and cheap to install. It is not necessary to hire a consultant to do an initial assessment. Owners corporations may simply get quotes from a range of appropriately qualified tradespeople and then choose the best one. Refer to our short 'Window locks save lives' video series including a step-by-step DIY video 'How to install window locks', available from our website and YouTube channel.

## If the windows have grills over them, do they still need locks?

If the grills or bars over the windows are no more than 12.5cm apart in width then they may comply with the regulation. The law requires the window safety devices to be robust and childproof. Remember, ordinary flyscreens do not comply as they are not strong enough to stop a child falling through a window and can provide a false sense of security.

## Will the safety devices be included in the Tenancy Condition Report?

Landlords and tenants entering into a new tenancy agreement must use an up-to-date Residential Tenancy Condition Report which lists window safety devices. You can download the new condition report from the Forms page.

## Where can I get more information?

**If you are a tenant**, go to the Asking to make an alteration page for information about making minor changes to your home including installing window locks.

**If you are a landlord**, go to the Alteration requests from your tenant page for more information.

**If you own a strata unit**, more information about your rights and responsibilities is available from the Repairs and maintenance in a strata scheme page.

**If you need more details about the laws**, please refer to the *Strata Schemes Management Act 1996* No 138 or call us on 13 32 20.