



IMPROVING
CHILDREN'S
PRODUCT
SAFETY



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Statement of Consumer Safety Advocates on the Window Covering Manufacturers Association's "Best for Kids" Program

Program fails to protect all consumers and children; falls far short of the proposed federal standard

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, safety advocates at Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, Kids in Danger, Parents for Window Blind Safety, and Independent Safety Consulting reminded the Window Covering Manufacturers Association (WCMA): kids and cords don't mix. Our organizations continue to urge the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and WCMA to significantly address the hazards posed to children by corded window coverings.

WCMA's new "Best for Kids" voluntary certification program leaves dangerous window blinds on the market and fails to give parents the tools they need to make safe purchases. The new program was announced on May 6, 2015, to create a voluntary program for window covering manufacturers to review products that meet WCMA criteria and label those that pass as "Best for Kids." Unfortunately, while this program provides assurances that cordless products are available to consumers, it fails to effectively address hazards posed by all corded window coverings and require that all window covering products be safe. Under this program, WCMA member companies will still be selling window coverings that pose unreasonable and unacceptable risks to children.

In May 2013, Parents for Window Blind Safety, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, Kids in Danger, Independent Safety Consulting and four other groups petitioned CPSC to develop a mandatory standard that prohibits any window covering cords where a feasible cordless alternative exists, and for those instances where a feasible cordless alternative does not exist, requires that all cords be made inaccessible through the use of passive guarding devices. The petition was granted in October 2014, and the Commission voted unanimously to address the serious hazards of window covering cords.

CPSC is currently working on a mandatory standard that would make sure window coverings are safe. There are currently cordless products on the market, but consumer confusion about the

risks of cords leads many consumers to purchase corded products. CPSC's rule, which the above groups strongly support, would keep all window coverings, not just certain "certified" ones, from posing risks to consumers. After decades of voluntary measures and various educational campaigns from WCMA and its members that have failed, safety advocates stand strongly behind CPSC's mandatory rule as the approach that consumers need to keep kids safe.

By contrast, WCMA's self-governing program will require labeling on certified products, while promoting other corded products as "safe" corded products. This only continues the confusion that consumers have when purchasing window covering products. Because hazardous corded products are likely to be the less expensive ones offered for sale, this program will not create a significant motivation for change in the marketplace, which is essential to reducing the rate of death and injury caused by corded window coverings. In fact, a parents' group already has a similar program. Therefore, WCMA's program will not significantly change the status quo, while it will make the already confusing labels on window coverings even more difficult to decipher.

The clear solution is to ensure that only cordless products, or products with cords made inaccessible by a passive guarding device, are available for sale. This is where safety advocates are focusing their efforts – and they urge WCMA to do the same.

Unfortunately, the "Best for Kids" program won't adequately protect kids. There will still be hundreds of products manufactured every year with long cords that can strangle children in seconds. The safety advocates today ask: why not make *all* blinds "Best" for our kids?

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Please also see a separate statement on this program from Parents for Window Blind Safety [here](#)