

Protecting Wisconsin Consumers for 75 Years

Childproofing your home

Many children are injured or killed by hazards in the home each year. The good news is that many of these incidents can be prevented by using simple child safety devices on the market today.

Any safety device you buy should be sturdy enough to prevent injury to your child, yet easy for you to use. It is important to follow installation instructions carefully. In addition, if you have older children in the house, be sure they re-secure safety devices. Remember that no device is completely childproof – determined youngsters have been known to disable them.

Here are some child safety devices that can help prevent many injuries to young children.

SAFETY LATCHES & LOCKS

on cabinets and drawers can help prevent children from gaining access to medicines and household cleaners, as well as knives and other sharp objects. Look for safety latches and locks that adults can easily install and use, but are sturdy enough to withstand pulls and tugs from children. Safety latches are not a guarantee of protection, but they can make it more difficult for children to reach dangerous substances. Even products with child resistant packaging should

be locked away, out of reach; this packaging is not childproof.

SAFETY GATES can help keep children away from stairs or dangerous areas.

Look for safety gates that children cannot dislodge easily, but that adults can open and close without difficulty. For the top of stairs, gates that screw to the wall are more secure than “pressure gates.”

New safety gates that meet safety standards display a certification seal from the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA). The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends replacing older safety gates that have “V” shapes that are large enough for a child’s head and neck to fit into.

DOOR KNOB COVERS and DOOR LOCKS can help keep children away from places with hazards, including swimming pools.

Be sure the doorknob cover is sturdy enough not to break, but allows a door to be opened quickly by an adult in case of emergency. By restricting access to potentially hazardous rooms in the home, doorknob covers could help prevent many kinds of injuries. To prevent access to swimming pools, door locks

should be placed high out of reach of young children. Locks should be used in addition to fences and door alarms. Sliding glass doors, with locks that must be re-secured after each use, are often not an effective barrier to pools.

TOILET LOCKS keep toilet lids closed. Children are top heavy and can lean and fall into a toilet easily. They can drown in just one inch of water.

ANTI-SCALD DEVICES for regulating water temperature can help prevent burns.

Consider using anti-scald devices for faucets and showerheads. A plumber may need to install these. In addition, if you live in your own home, set water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent burns from hot water.

WATER SAFETY Do not leave a baby unattended in the bathroom. Before beginning to bathe a child, have all supplies within arm’s reach and in front of you. Do not leave a small child alone with any container of liquid, including wading pools, scrub buckets and toilets.

SMOKE DETECTORS are essential safety devices for protection against fire deaths and injuries.

Check smoke detectors once a month to make sure they are working. If detectors are battery operated, change batteries at least once a year or consider using 10-year batteries.

WINDOW GUARDS and SAFETY NETTING for balconies and decks can help prevent serious falls.

Check these safety devices frequently to make sure they are secure and properly installed and maintained. There should be no more than four inches between the bars of the window guard. If you have window guards, be sure that at least one window in each room can be easily used for escape in a fire. Window screens are not effective for preventing children from falling out of windows.

CORNER & EDGE BUMPERS can be used with furniture and a fireplace hearth to help prevent injuries from falls or to soften falls against sharp or rough edges.

Be sure to look for bumpers that stay securely on furniture or hearth edges.

OUTLET COVERS and OUTLET PLATES can help protect children from electrical shock and possible electrocution. Be sure the outlet protectors cannot be easily removed by children and are large enough that children cannot choke on them.

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) DETECTOR can help prevent CO poisoning.

Consumers should install CO detectors near sleeping areas in their homes. Households that should use CO detectors include

those with gas or oil heat or with attached garages.

CORDLESS WINDOW COVERINGS are recommended to help prevent deaths and injuries from strangulation in loops of cords.

Examine all shades and blinds for exposed cords on the front and back sides of the product. Be sure that tasseled pull cords are as short as possible and all dangling cords are eliminated. If at all possible, use only non-corded window coverings in homes where infants and young children are present.

If you cannot afford new, cordless window coverings, the Window Covering Safety Council offers a detailed guide for retrofitting older corded window coverings as well as a free retrofitting kit which can be ordered by contacting:

Window Covering Safety Council
www.windowcoverings.org
(800) 506-4636

DOOR STOPS & HOLDERS on doors and door hinges can help prevent small fingers and heads from being pinched or crushed in doors and door hinges. Be sure any safety device for doors is easy to use and is not likely to break into small parts, which could be a choking hazard for young children.

FIREARM LOCKING MECHANISMS & LOCKING STORAGE CONTAINERS are methods of childproofing firearms. If you have a gun in your home, you must recognize the need and be aware of the methods of childproofing it.

- Always store your firearm unloaded.

- Use firearms safety devices AND store the firearm in a locked container.
- Do not store your firearm where it is visible.
- Do not store your firearm in a bedside table, under your mattress, pillow, or on a closet shelf.
- Do not store your firearm among your valuables (such as jewelry or cameras) unless it is locked in a secure container.
- Consider storing firearms not possessed for self-defense in a safe and secure manner away from the home.

For more information or to file a complaint, visit our website or contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection.

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(Information taken from U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission fact sheet, "Childproofing your Home")

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Child safety devices are an important aid to parental supervision. Here are 13 child safety devices that will help keep your home and children safer.

1. **SAFETY LATCHES and LOCKS** for cabinets and drawers in kitchens, bathrooms, and other areas to help prevent poisonings and other injuries.
2. **SAFETY GATES** to prevent falls down stairs & to keep children away from dangerous areas.
3. **DOOR KNOB COVERS and DOOR LOCKS** to help prevent children from entering rooms and other areas with possible dangers.
4. **TOILET LOCKS** to help prevent drowning.
5. **ANTI-SCALD DEVICES** for faucets and shower heads and toilet locks. Set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent burns from hot water.
6. **SMOKE DETECTORS** on every level of your home and near bedrooms to alert you to fires.
7. **WINDOW GUARDS and SAFETY NETTING** to help prevent falls from windows, balconies, decks, and landings.
8. **CORNER & EDGE BUMPERS** to help prevent injuries from falls against sharp edges of furniture and fireplaces.
9. **OUTLET COVERS and OUTLET PLATES** to help prevent electrocution.
10. **CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) DETECTOR** outside bedrooms to help prevent CO poisoning.
11. **CORDLESS WINDOW COVERINGS** or use **SAFETY TASSELS** and cut window blind cords to help prevent children from strangling in blind cord loops.
12. **DOOR STOPS and DOOR HOLDERS** to help prevent injuries to fingers and hands.
13. **FIREARM LOCKING MECHANISMS & LOCKING STORAGE CONTAINERS** to prevent children from accessing and tampering with firearms.

Shopping for Safety Devices

You can childproof your home for a fraction of what it would cost to have a professional do it, and safety devices are easy to find. You can buy them at hardware stores, baby equipment shops, supermarkets, drug stores, home and linen stores, and through mail order catalogues.