



COMMANDER, NAVY INSTALLATIONS COMMAND

An Important Message on Window Safety and Fall Prevention

Window safety is a critical concern for our families, one that can sometimes be overlooked. Every year, far too many children are injured or tragically die from preventable window falls. The numbers are staggering. On average 3,300 children are injured and eight die each year in the U.S. from window falls. Children aged five and under are most vulnerable, with falls most common during spring and summer when windows are frequently open. I'm asking for your help in addressing this issue. Our collective attention and focus are needed to prevent future tragedies.

Recently, our community has been deeply affected by several heartbreaking events: two injuries and three deaths of military children resulting from falls from second-story windows. These incidents serve as a stark reminder of the potential dangers our children face, even in familiar environments. We can take for granted the threats present in our homes, such as stairs, under-sink chemicals, bathtubs, and windows. In light of these recent events, we are initiating an intensified awareness and prevention campaign to better protect our children.

The natural curiosity of children and their eagerness to explore can sometimes place them in unexpected danger when left unattended, even briefly. It's often in unassuming ordinary moments that accidents can occur, highlighting the importance of heightened awareness and proactive safety measures.

Here are a few things to keep in mind about windows in your home:

- **Safety starts at home.** Teach children about window safety, ensure window fall prevention devices are installed correctly and always engaged, and familiarize yourself with available resources. It truly takes an all-hands effort to prevent accidents. Window safety locks are inexpensive and easy to install in your own home, are often required of landlords, and can be requested during lease negotiations.
- **Windows are not playgrounds.** Teach children that windows are not safe to play near or lean against. Explain the potential danger in a way they understand. "Windows are for looking, not touching."
- **Check twice and watch always.** Make a habit of quickly checking windows during your daily routine — when you open or close the curtains, before you turn the lights off, etc. Most importantly, keep furniture and toys away from windows, especially on upper floors, to prevent children from climbing.
- **Protect what matters.** Window safety devices only work when they're properly installed and engaged. Just as seatbelts have been shown to help save lives in car accidents, properly functioning and engaged window safety devices can also help save lives. If you find that any device is missing or broken in your military housing, contact Navy Housing immediately. It's a simple step that can prevent a tragedy. If you do not live in Navy Housing, reach out to your landlord directly or purchase and install window safety devices in your own home. It's a simple step that can prevent a tragedy.
- **Screens are for bugs.** Remember that typical window screens are designed to keep insects out, not to prevent falls. Teach children not to push on or lean against screens.
- **Designate safe play areas.** Build play areas away from windows. Never leave open windows unsupervised, especially when young children are present.

It is truly the honor of my life to be part of our Navy team and a community where Sailors help Sailors. Every child's wellbeing matters, and every step we take to protect our Navy family matters. Every one of our children is a precious gift. Let's redouble our efforts to protect them!

Thank you for all you do to keep our Navy families safe, supported, and strong.



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