



# CPSC Safety Alert

## Roman Shades and Roll Up Blinds Pose Strangulation Hazard to Children

Pub. #5115

For more than a decade the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has been focused on reducing injuries and deaths associated with window coverings. The CPSC first addressed the issue after receiving reports of incidents involving cords on window blinds.

In a continuing effort to protect infants and young children from strangulation hazards from window coverings, the agency is warning against the possible strangulation hazard with Roman shades. CPSC staff is aware of at least two recent deaths and multiple non-fatal incidents with Roman shades.

The inner cords of Roman shades (see Fig. 1 and 2) are particularly accessible because the cords run through rings or slots in the back of the shade that are spaced fairly wide apart (typically 8 inches) as shown in Fig. 2. This large spacing creates the potential for a child to place his/her neck in the length of cord between the rings. Furthermore, some Roman shades do not use a head rail with a locking mechanism to limit the movement of the operating cords, increasing the ease with which a loop can be formed by pulling down on the inner cord.

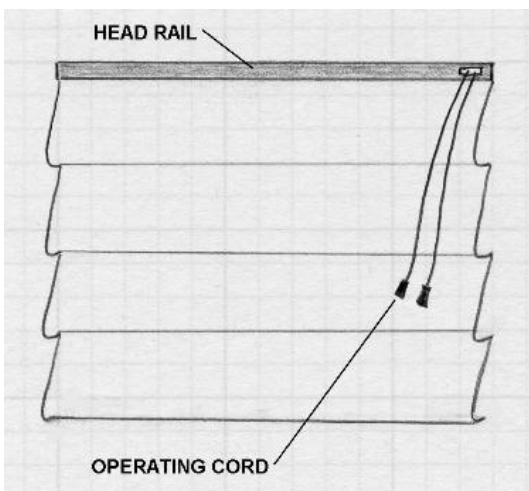


Figure 1 - Typical Roman Shade (Front)

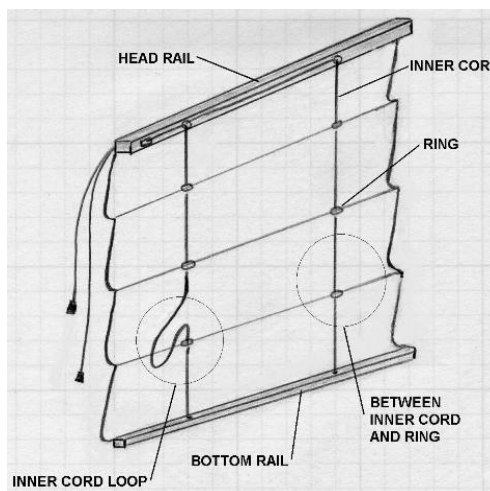
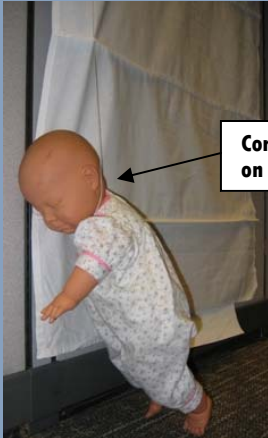


Figure 2 - Hazards on Backside of Roman Shade



**Roman shades are hazardous because the inner cord can be pulled down to form a loop if:**

- a) there is nothing at the head rail such as a cord lock or inner cord stop to prevent the cord from being pulled down, and/or
- b) the fabric is light enough that it raises as the inner cord is pulled out.



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A roll up blind is a window covering product that consists of some type of flexible material that is rolled up and suspended by two cord loops, called lifting loops as seen in Figure 3. When the lifting loop cords are pulled, the loops rise, causing the flexible material to roll up from the bottom of the blind. The cords that loop around the rolled material are referred to as the inner cords. The same cords on the other side of the head rail that are pulled to raise the rolled up material are called operating cords.

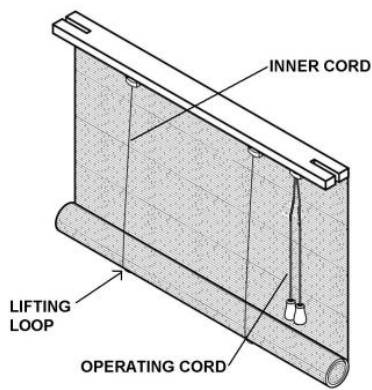


Figure 3 - Typical Roll Up Blind With Cord Loop Lift System

**CPSC reminds consumers to examine all Roman shades and roll up blinds in their homes.**

If looped pull cords are present or exposed inner cords are found on the back of blinds or shades and children are in the home or occasionally visit your home, please consider replacing them with blinds or shades that do not have exposed pull cords or inner cords.

## The hazards associated with the inner cord of roll up blinds are:

a) Strangulation in a free standing loop when the lifting loops slides off the side of the roll up blind. This can occur most easily when the blind is fully lowered and there is no weight on the lifting loops. There has been a fatality in a free standing loop on a roll up blind that was fully lowered.



b) Strangulation between the lifting loops and roll material. A child can also place his/her neck between the lifting loop and the roll up material. The risk of strangulation depends on the tension in the lifting loop cord.

