



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

Thomas Farley, M.D., M.P.H.  
Commissioner

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**(212) 788-5290**

**Prevent Window Falls this Summer: Make Sure Window Guards Are in Place**

*9 children have fallen in the past 3 months*

**August 25, 2009** – Open windows offer relief from the summer heat, but they can pose hazards for small children. To protect children from falls, the Health Department urges New Yorkers to make sure window guards are in place. City law requires the owner of any building with three or more apartments to install window guards in units where children under age 11 live. Anyone caring for children 10 years old or younger in their home should inform their building’s owner or superintendent and ask to have window guards properly installed. People living in one- or two-family homes should consider installing guards in any window not used as an emergency exit.

“Window guards prevent falls and protect children,” said Dr. Thomas Farley, New York City Health Commissioner – “but only if landlords, tenants and parents make sure they are installed. Even if you don’t have children living in your home, it’s a good idea to install window guards if children visit frequently.”

Nine New York City children have fallen from residential windows since June. Six of the nine falls could have been prevented if the window guard regulation was followed. Three of the six falls resulted in death.

Tenants whose landlords fail to provide window guards can call **311** to file a complaint. Landlords may also call **311** to report tenants who refuse to have approved window guards installed as required by law.

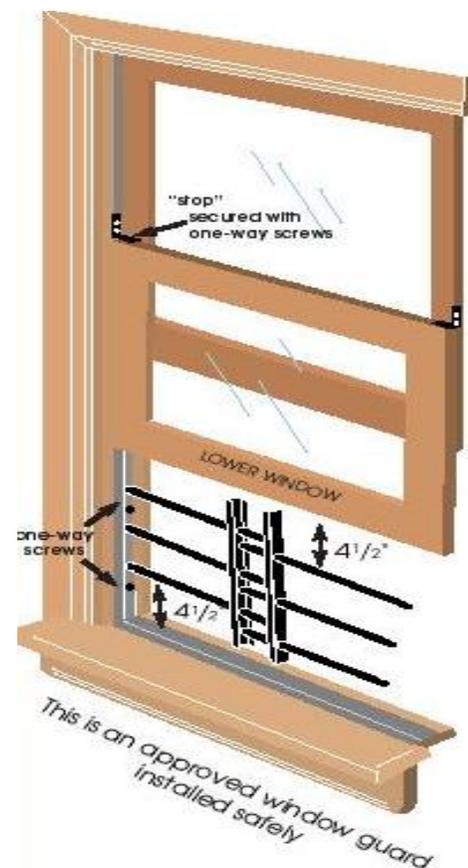
If children 10 years or younger live in your apartment, or if you provide child care services in your apartment, you must:

- Inform the landlord if you live in a building with three or more apartments.
- Let the landlord come in to install approved window guards.
- **Not** remove window guards, even partially, once they are installed.
- **Not** make alterations to window guards.

Families living in one or two story homes should consider installing window guards in any window not used as an emergency exit if they have young children.

**Approved Window Guards and Proper Installation**

Every window guard must have a Health Department



approval number on the inside stile and must be appropriate for the window it occupies. For information on approved window guards, where to buy them and how to install them, New Yorkers can call **311** and ask for the Health Department's Window Falls Prevention Program.

The Health Department offers the following guidelines to determine if your approved window guards are properly installed:

- On regular double-hung windows (pictured above), two L-shaped stops should be screwed into the window's track – one on each side – to keep the bottom window from rising more than 4 ½ inches above the top bar of a window guard. If you don't have double-hung windows, you must use special window guards and approved stops.
- Whatever the window type, it should not have an unguarded opening of more than 4 ½ inches if children live in the unit. Approved limiting devices should be installed on any window for which a window guard is unavailable.
- The window guard must be installed securely on both sides with one-way or tamper-proof screws approved by the Health Department.
- A window guard installed in a rotting or insecure frame may fall out. Landlords must repair or replace insecure window frames and install approved window guards.
- If a window guard must be removed to install an air conditioning unit, the job should be done by a professional. The air conditioner must be installed with one-way or tamper-proof screws, and the side panels should be made of metal or another solid, rigid material.

#### **Additional Recommendations to Prevent Window Falls**

- Check window guards periodically to assure they are secure. If a window guard feels loose when you push or pull the bars, it could become detached or fall out if a child leans or climbs on it.
- Never let your child play on balconies, rooftops or fire escapes, near elevator shafts, or in hallways with windows that do not have approved window guards.

For more information about approved window guards, preventing window falls, or about your rights as a tenant, call **311** or visit [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/win/win.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/win/win.shtml).

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