



**NSAI**  
Standards

Irish Standard  
I.S. 386:2012

# Safety of corded window products – Guidance for procurement, measuring, manufacture, installation and retrofitting

## I.S. 386:2012

*Incorporating amendments/corrigenda/National Annexes issued since publication:*

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) produces the following categories of formal documents:

I.S. xxx: Irish Standard – national specification based on the consensus of an expert panel and subject to public consultation.

S.R. xxx: Standard Recommendation - recommendation based on the consensus of an expert panel and subject to public consultation.

SWiFT xxx: A rapidly developed recommendatory document based on the consensus of the participants of an NSAI workshop.

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<b>NSAI</b> 1 Swift Square, Northwood, Santry Dublin 9	T +353 1 807 3800 F +353 1 807 3838 E standards@nsai.ie W NSAI.ie	<b>Sales:</b> T +353 1 857 6730 F +353 1 857 6729 W standards.ie
Údarás um Chaighdeáin Náisiúnta na hÉireann		

**DECLARATION**

OF

SPECIFICATION

ENTITLED

SAFETY OF CORDED WINDOW PRODUCTS –  
GUIDANCE FOR PROCUREMENT, MEASURING, MANUFACTURE,  
INSTALLATION AND RETROFITTING

AS

THE IRISH STANDARD SPECIFICATION FOR

SAFETY OF CORDED WINDOW PRODUCTS –  
GUIDANCE FOR PROCUREMENT, MEASURING, MANUFACTURE,  
INSTALLATION AND RETROFITTING

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NSAI in exercise of the power conferred by section 16 (3) of the National Standards Authority of Ireland Act, 1996 (No. 28 of 1996) and with the consent of the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, hereby declare as follows:

1. This instrument may be cited as the Standard Specification (Safety of corded window products – Guidance for procurement, measuring, manufacture, installation and retrofitting) Declaration, 2012.
2. (1) The Specification set forth in the Schedule to this declaration is hereby declared to be the standard specification for Safety of corded window products – Guidance for procurement, measuring, manufacture, installation and retrofitting.  
  
(2) The said standard specification may be cited as Irish Standard 386:2012 or as I.S. 386:2012.

# Contents

Page

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1 Scope</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>2 Normative references</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>3 Terms and definitions</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4 Requirements</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4.1 General requirements</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4.2 Measuring for installation</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>4.3 Procurement of corded window products and sub-assembled corded-window products and components</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>4.4 Manufacture of corded-window products including safety requirements</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>4.4.1 General requirements</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>4.4.2 Safety systems</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>4.5 Installation of corded window products including safety requirements</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>4.6 Information to be supplied by the manufacturer/importer/retailer/distributor to the consumer</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>4.6.1 General</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>4.6.2 Manufacturing</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>4.6.3 Point of sale</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>4.6.4 Information on installation including safety aspects</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>4.6.5 Warning label</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>4.7 Training requirements for installers/manufacturers/sales representatives</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>4.8 Retrofitting</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Annex A (informative) Step-by-step guide to installation in consideration of safety aspects</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>A.1 Metal venetian blind – cord operated</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>A.2 Pleated blind – cord operated</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>A.3 Roller blind – motor operated</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>A.4 Roman blind – chain operated</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>A.5 Roman blind – cord operated</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>A.6 Vertical blind – cord and chain operated</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>A.7 Roller blind – spring operated</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>A.8 Vertical blind – wand operated</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>A.9 Wood venetian blind – cord operated</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>A.10 Roller blind – chain operated with breakaway connectors</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>A.11 Roller blind – chain operated continuous loop</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Annex B (informative) Suitable safety systems for the protection from the risk of strangulation</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>B.1 Accumulation systems</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>B.2 Cord and chain tidy (tensioning system)</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>B.3 Breakaway connector</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>B.4 Breakaway tassel</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>B.5 Non-tangle tassels</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>B.6 Cord stop</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>B.7 Breakaway clip</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Annex C (informative) Example of installation instructions to be provided to the consumer</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Annex D (informative) Training of staff</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>31</b>

## **Foreword**

The text of this Standard has been prepared by the NSAI Technical Committee on the "Safety of Internal Window Blinds".

This Irish Standard aims at reducing as far as possible those risks, which are not evident to users in relation to corded window products. Assuming that the corded window products are used in the manner for which they are intended, they should not present a risk. Allowance should be made for normal or foreseeable use, bearing in mind the normal behaviour of children who do not generally share the same degree of care as the average adult user. Young children can strangle in the loop of pull cords, chains and tapes, and cords that operate window coverings. They can also wrap cords around their necks and strangle. Parents and guardian need to be informed of the dangers of loops when they are present, and the risks they pose to young children. Young children should not be left unattended.

Attention is drawn to the European standard I.S. EN 13120 Internal blinds – Performance requirements including safety in relation to the manufacture of internal window blinds including safety in use requirements.

Attention is also drawn to I.S. 387 Internal corded window products – Safety requirements.

In line with international standards the decimal point is shown as a comma (,) throughout this document.
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## **Introduction**

Many homes have blinds and other window coverings with cords that are used to raise or lower the product (operating cord) or to connect its different parts (inner cord). These cords pose a strangulation hazard to children, as loops can be formed and children can become entangled in them, while playing near the window. Children can also climb on window sills or furniture to access the cords.

Accidents can also happen when beds or cots are placed near windows where cords are within reach of children. In 1998, in a sample of hospitals in the Member States of the European Union, 129 children were hospitalised due to an injury involving a window blind loop or drapery cord. In the United Kingdom, it is estimated that one or two children die every year after becoming entangled in the cords of a blind. More recently, the Commission has become aware of ten fatal accidents involving children aged between 15 and 36 months that occurred in Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Turkey in the period 2008 to 2010. In the United States 119 fatalities and 111 near-misses involving corded window coverings were reported to have occurred since 1999. In Canada, 28 fatalities and 23 near-misses have been linked to the same products since 1986. In Australia, at least 10 children have been accidentally strangled by blind cords since 2000. However, these figures capture only a part of the problem, as many such accidents are not reported.

Research indicates that most accidental deaths involving blind cords happen in bedrooms and the children concerned are aged between 16 months and 36 months. Over half these accidents happen to children around 23 months. Although fully mobile at that age, children find it difficult to free themselves if they become entangled in the cords, as their heads still weigh more in proportion to their bodies compared to adults, and their muscular control is not yet fully developed. In addition, their windpipes have not yet fully developed and are thus smaller and less rigid than in adults and older children, so that they suffocate more quickly if their necks are constricted.

Motorisation can eliminate the risks associated with the operating cords, but not the risks relating to the inner cords. Other window coverings with hazardous cords exposed pose a similar risk to children.

Reports of cord-related accidents give the cause of death as internal asphyxiation. Existing European standards relating to window coverings and blinds do not contain requirements to address this risk. To cover the risk of incorrect installation or lack of installation, manufacturers should improve the design of the safety systems or the window coverings to prevent the product being used if the safety systems are not properly installed. It is therefore necessary to lay down safety requirements to ensure that internal blinds and other corded window coverings are inherently safe for children, eliminating the risk of strangulation and internal asphyxiation due to accessible cords and small parts. In addition to requirements concerning the safe operation of corded window coverings and blinds, requirements and product safety information must be also developed for the safety systems.

## SCHEDULE

### **Safety of corded window products – Guidance for procurement, measuring, manufacture, installation and retrofitting**

#### **1 Scope**

This Irish Standard gives guidance:

- on the procurement of assembled and sub-assembled blinds/draperies and components;
- for the manufacture and installation including safety of internal window blinds, draperies, insect screens, and blinds in sealed glazed units;
- on curricula for training those that measure, install internal window blinds, draperies, insect screens, and blinds in sealed glazed units;
- on information to be supplied by the manufacturer/importer/retailer/distributor to the consumer at point of sale in relation to;
  - installation including safety aspects,
  - maintenance,
  - the safe use of the product.

This Irish Standard should be read in conjunction with I.S. EN 13120, Internal blinds - Performance requirements including safety and I.S. 387.

#### **2 Normative references**

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

I.S. EN 13120, *Internal blinds – Performance requirements including safety*

I.S. 387, *Internal Corded Window Products – Safety requirements*

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