



Bunk Bed Safety

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Bunk beds are economically convenient and a fun way for children to share a bedroom. To make sure your children enjoy their bunk in a safe manner, make sure they understand the 'rules' of use, and check that the bunk bed you own, or are considering purchasing, meets current Safety Standards.

Since 1987, there have been more than 61 injuries or near misses associated with bunk beds reported to Health Canada. Some of these incidents were related to strangulation or suffocation by entrapment, and some resulted in death. There were also incidents related to falls.



A report from the Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP) indicates that between 1999 and 2006, there were 2,530 bunk bed-related injuries in Canada. Over 65% of these injuries (1650 in total) were related to incidents occurring from the top bunk.

Check [Health Canada's Consumer Product Recall Page](#) for bunk beds that have been recalled and make sure the bunk bed you have, or one that you are considering purchasing, is not on the list. Once you bring a bunk bed home, follow the manufacturer's instructions to make sure it is assembled correctly.

Children's Safety Association of Canada (CSAC) recommends you purchase only a bunk bed that meets the latest **ASTM F1427** standard. Visit the manufacturer's website, ask your retailer, or check the product label, to find out if your bunk bed meets these safety standards.

Bunk Bed Do's and Don'ts

- Children must be at least six (6) years of age before they can use the top bunk. If the manufacturer allows for this option, consider removing and storing the top bunk, or setting it next to the lower bunk until the child is old enough to use it. If the top bunk is used on the

floor, never use the guard rails because they were designed to be used with a child of at least 6 years of age and therefore could pose as a hazardous entrapment. Follow all manufacturers' instructions when removing and storing the top bunk. Check that there are no catch points on the newly exposed parts of the lower bunk that could present a strangulation hazard.

- ➔ Children must always use a ladder when going up and down a bunk bed.
- ➔ Only one child is allowed on the top bunk at a time.
- ➔ Children should not play underneath a bunk bed unless it is specifically designed as a play area by the manufacturer.
- ➔ Children should not tie anything to the bunk bed, i.e. cords, sashes or ropes.
- ➔ Do not allow children to keep large toys or other objects, such as items with cords, in the bed. They may present a suffocation or strangulation hazard.

Safety Tips

- ➔ Keep bunk beds away from window blinds or curtains with cords to avoid children from becoming entangled. This is a strangulation hazard.
- ➔ Please ensure that the ladder is always securely attached to the bunk bed and in good condition.
- ➔ Teach children to use the ladder to get safely up and down. Consider placing a nightlight nearby so that children can use the ladder with safety in the dark.
- ➔ Ensure any belts, ties or sashes on children's bathrobes, dressing gowns, housecoats and robes are removed or stitched firmly to the centre back of the clothing. These can become serious strangulation hazards. Health Canada has received reports of deaths related to these items and bunk beds.
- ➔ Regularly check screws and other attachments to ensure they are securely fastened as they may loosen over time.



Most Reported Injuries from bunk beds occur from:

- ➔ falls from the top bunk
- ➔ children getting their heads or bodies caught between the mattress and bed or between two different parts of the bed, and

- ➔ strangulation by cords, ropes or sashes tied to the bed.

What to look for when purchasing a bunk bed:

- ➔ Children's Safety Association of Canada (CSAC) recommends purchasing only bunk beds meeting the **latest ASTM F1427** Safety Standard for bunk beds. Before you buy please check the label, visit the manufacturer's web site, or ask the retailer, to find out if the bunk bed you are considering meets these standards.
- ➔ Make sure the bed is sturdy and undamaged. Don't buy a metal bunk bed if it has cracks in the welding.
- ➔ Make sure the top bunk has guardrails on all sides, even if the bunk bed is placed against a wall. A child can become trapped between the wall and the bed if a guard rail is missing.
- ➔ To reduce the risk of clothes getting caught, make sure parts of the bed such as corner posts and ladders do not extend more than 5mm (0.2 inches) above the upper edge of the bed.
- ➔ The mattress must fit tightly against all sides of the bed and is at least 127 mm (5 inches) below the top guardrails and end panels, otherwise the child might get caught in the space and suffocate. When buying a replacement mattress, ensure it is the correct size and thickness for the bunk bed. The warning label required by the ASTM standard specifies these dimensions. If the mattress is too thin or soft, the child could get trapped between the underside of the guard rail and the mattress.
- ➔ Please ensure that the ladder is always securely attached to the bunk bed and in good condition.
- ➔ The bed should have a label that identifies the manufacturer, distributor or seller. There should also be a warning label attached permanently to the inside of the bed. **These labels should never be removed, modified or moved as they contain important safety information.**



For more safety tips, please see our [Bunk Bed Safety Public Education Bulletin](#).

For further information or to report an injury or complaint, please contact Health Canada's Consumer Product Safety program at 1-866-662-0666 (toll-free) or CPS-SPC@hc-sc.gc.ca or visit the [Consumer Product Safety \(CPS\) section](#) of Health Canada's Web site.