

# Help Prevent Window Falls As Weather Gets Warmer

*Over decades, properly installed window guards have protected thousands of children from window falls*

*Last year, there were three window falls among children 10 years of age or younger; there were no fatalities*

**April 20, 2023** — As the weather gets warmer, the Health Department, the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) today urged all building owners, homeowners and tenants to take action to prevent window falls. Securely installed window guards save lives. In New York City, owners of buildings with three or more residential units are required to install approved window guards or limiting devices in any apartment where a child 10 years old or younger lives or spends time. Approved window guards must be properly installed in all windows that are not emergency exits. Property owners must also install window guards if a tenant requests them, even if there are no children in the apartment.

“Window guards save lives, said **Health Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan**. “This simple public health intervention has reduced window falls from around 100 per year in the 1970s to a fraction of that today. Yet falls do still occur and are entirely preventable. If you have a child 10 or younger and there are no window guards in your home, speak with your building owner as soon as possible so they can install approved window guards or limiting devices.”

New York City was the first U.S. city to adopt a window guard policy, in 1976. Before the law was passed, some years saw more than 100 falls, some fatal, occur each year. In the last 20 years, that number has been drastically lower.

In 2022, of three window falls, one occurred due to improperly installed window guards, and two occurred because of improper window air conditioning (AC) unit installation. Falls are preventable. Owners must comply with window guard requirements and tenants must let the building owner know when a child age 10 or younger lives or is cared for in the apartment.

“All parents know that our littlest ones are so playful and curious. Exploring their environment is how they grow and develop so it is vital that we keep those environments as safe as possible. Window guards are an essential part of a safe home for children. As the weather gets warmer and New Yorkers start to open their windows, please be sure that window guards are installed to prevent tragedies and keep little ones safe from unintentional injury,” said **Administration for Children’s Services Commissioner Jess Dannhauser**.

It takes a village to raise kids, and in New York City that means all of us—from parents and caregivers to landlords and inspectors— play a role in keeping our kids safe from

window falls and injuries,” said **HPD Commissioner Adolfo Carrión Jr.** “HPD will continue to prioritize window guard safety during inspections and ensure landlords are following the law, so homes with kids are equipped with window guards. If you have any questions or concerns about window guards, please call 311 immediately.”

Condominium owners should check with building management to determine who needs to install and repair window guards in their apartments. Maintaining hallway windows in condominium buildings is the management’s responsibility. In co-op buildings, building management needs to install and maintain all window guards and limiting devices. One- and two-family homes are not legally required to have window guards, but installation is recommended anywhere there are aged 10 or younger.

Building owners must permanently install window [AC units](#) (PDF) using one-way tamper-resistant screws in apartments where a child aged 10 or younger lives. The AC must be permanently and securely bolted into the window frame without leaving any open space greater than 4 1/2 inches.

In dwelling units with children 10 years old or younger, tenants must:

1. Inform the building owner and complete the annual notice provided by the landlord.
2. Allow the building owner or a representative access to the apartment to install window guards or stopping devices that keep windows from opening more than 4½ inches.
3. Never alter or remove window guards or limiting devices once they are installed.
4. Never leave a child alone in a room where there are open windows until window guards or limiting devices are properly installed.

If a building owner refuses to install window guards, tenants should **call 311** to file a complaint with HPD. Building owners may also **call 311** to report tenants who refuse to allow guards to be installed as required by law.

HPD responds to complaints to checks for window guards during housing maintenance code inspections and issues violations when window guards are improperly installed or missing. In addition, HPD’s Emergency Repair Program arranges for the installation or repair of window guards when appropriate to keep children safe.

For information about window guards, visit [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health) and search for [window guards](#). You can also email the Health Department at [windowfallprevention@health.nyc.gov](mailto:windowfallprevention@health.nyc.gov).

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