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Subject: Keeping Kids Safe from Window Falls
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Date: Tue, Sep 11, 2018 11:15 am
To: CRRNet <crrnet@googlegroups.com>

Dear CRR Colleagues:

Recently my friends Don Porth and Jim Tidwell shared information on their efforts to reduce the incidence of pediatric injuries and deaths from window falls. This is something we tracked carefully at the Home Safety Council years ago and I'm sorry to say things have not improved much since that time…In 2015 Safe Kids Worldwide reported that an average of 8 children ages 5 and under die and 3,300 others suffer severe injuries such as TBI each year. These numbers are thought to be significantly under-reported.

CRR fire departments can learn more about preventing falls, including window falls, through the new online learning modules - **Essentials of Community Risk Reduction** - available for free at IFSTA's ResourceOne:
https://www.ifsta.org/content/essentials-community-risk-reduction

Effective risk reduction options to keep young children safe include:
1) Window Opening Control Devices that when properly installed limit the window opening to less than 4 inches. Similar to a child-resistant medicine container, these devices require 2 motions to open them so young children are not likely to succeed.
2) Window Guards classified as fall prevention devices consist of horizontal or vertical bars (or sometimes netting) that are screwed inside the window frame. They are removable by depressing two separate spring-loaded pins and collapsing the telescoping tubes into themselves - again, complicated enough that young children are unlikely to defeat them.

The good news is these two options can be readily installed during a Home Safety Visit, immediately mitigating the risk for young children in the home. The disadvantage is that without proper education and motivation, adults in the home could easily remove the devices and eliminate the protection. A typical scenario is that parents override these devices to open the window all the way for ventilation - which obviously defeats the purpose. When installing these it's important to underscore with caregivers the danger associated with overriding the protection to get fresh air.

Don and Jim have just alerted me to an exciting and more durable new option from Tough Tek Metals that I wanted to share with you:
3) Code-compliant safety screens that can withstand more than a minimum of 60 pounds of static force and be removed without tools and less than 15 pounds of force by adults and emergency responders. These offer a more permanent solution, particularly suited to managed and multi-family occupancies. Safety screens are much more robust than conventional window screens with a level of strength that meets ASTM safety standards. Beyond the obvious safety benefits, research has shown a positive ROI for building owner and managers as they last longer and reduce maintenance costs.

The Longview Fire Department has conducted some testing using these new safety screens:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWWyA4l9wBo&t=

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esbY0IIC0ig

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLXops_GuD8

The following fire agencies and leaders have reviewed this product and support it, including

Federal Fire Department, Oahu, Hawaii
    Fort Hood Fire Department, Fort Hood TX
    Former State Fire Marshal, Minnesota
     Former State Fire Marshal, Iowa
        Fort Knox, Fire Chief, USAG Fort Knox, KY
      Longview Fire Department, Longview, Washington
       Fort Wainwright Fire Department, Fort Wainwright, AK

Don has provided a great link for more fire service-oriented information on preventing injuries and deaths to young children from highly preventable window falls: StopAt4.com   He is available to answer questions you may have by emailing him at Don@PreventThink.com.

Thanks for your attention here, folks - it's an important topic for CRR leaders to be aware of.

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