



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Ashwin Vasani, MD, PhD
Commissioner

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SPRING IS HERE: CITY URGES NEW YORKERS TO TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT WINDOW FALLS

Over decades, properly installed window guards have protected thousands of children from death and serious injuries from window falls

Last year, there were nine window falls among children 10 years of age or younger; one was fatal

April 13, 2022 – 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](#) in any apartment where a child 10 years old or younger is cared for or lives. 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.

“Every fall from a window is preventable,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasani**. “The dramatic reduction in falls over the past four decades has been an untold public health success story for our children. But we can drive those incidents down even further. If you have a child age 10 or younger, I urge you to contact your building owner today so they can install approved window guards. If window guards or limiting devices are not yet installed, keep windows closed and make sure children cannot climb up to them. Screens are not a substitute for window guards.”

New York City was the first U.S. city to adopt a window guard policy in 1976. Before the law was passed, it was not uncommon for more than 100 falls, some fatal, to occur in a given year. In the last 20 years, there have been fewer than 20 falls annually.

In 2021, of nine window falls, seven falls occurred due to improperly installed window guards, and two falls occurred because of improper window air conditioning (AC) unit installation. One of the falls that occurred due to an improper temporary AC unit installation was fatal. 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 potential accidents,” said

Administration for Children’s Services Commissioner Jess Dannhauser.

"Window guards save lives, so no child should die or be injured by falling from a window," said **HPD Commissioner Adolfo Carrión Jr.** “Do your part by letting your landlord know when you need a window guard, or if you are a landlord, by immediately installing or replacing window guards if there is a child in the apartment. It’s the law. HPD is doing its part – whenever an HPD Inspector is in your apartment and you have a child age 10 or younger, we will issue a violation if window guards are not properly installed to protect your children from danger.”

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 young children.

Building owners must permanently install window [AC units](#) 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:

- Inform the building owner and complete the annual notice provided by the landlord.
- 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.
- Never alter or remove window guards or limiting devices once they are installed.
- 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 and search for [window guards](#). You can also email the Health Department at windowfallprevention@health.nyc.gov.

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