

Pane prevention

Some things just don't mix – oil and water, a brown belt with black shoes and kids with anything made of glass.

You can take all the precautions in the book to kid-proof your home, but short of boarding up your windows you can't definitively keep children and glass apart. Accidents are unavoidable, but in this case you can greatly reduce the risk of serious injury with safety window film.

Safety film can be applied easily to any glass surface, acting as a membrane that holds the broken glass together if an accident occurs. So instead of sharp shards flying out from a breakage the film will hold the shattered pieces in place. The broken pane will still need replacing but the chance of injury is minimised.

Ally Cronan, President of the Window Film Association of Australia and New Zealand (WFAANZ), comments, "Government buildings around the world use safety film to mitigate against bomb blast damage, so it can certainly stand up to the odd cricket ball or running toddler. If you haven't already done so, WFAANZ advises parents and carers review their home for glazing risk areas, particularly in children's bedrooms, playrooms, low windows and high traffic areas."

Safety film can be retrofit to your existing 'float' glass windows to bring them up to current Australian Standards for safety glass, which is a requirement for all pre-schools and schools and a must for home's with kids. Optically clear and highly transparent, safety film allows light to pass through and is 'elastomeric', meaning it has the ability to stretch.

Windows aren't the only danger points. Sliding glass doors, glass top coffee tables, cabinets with glass doors, transoms, panels, even fish tanks can be bolstered with safety film.

Dual-benefit films are now available in Australia with both safety and solar-control features. Windows with these films can meet safety standards while also blocking heat, controlling UV and reducing glare within the room – which of course means less energy consumption.

"Parents and carers may think they need completely new windows to achieve a certain level of safety. That's simply not the case," Ally said. "Windows with safety film can meet required safety standards at a fraction of the cost and with far less inconvenience and environmental impact as a new unit.

"Accidents will undoubtedly still occur, but imposing this simple and cost-effective measure will help keep damage – and tears – to a minimum".

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An important part of the process is hiring a professional with the necessary experience to install the safety film, as mistakes during its application could compromise its efficacy.

So how do find a professional you can trust? WFAANZ advises:

1. Go to the WFAANZ member directory (www.wfaanz.org.au/AUMemberSearch) to find an installer near you who abides by a strict code of practice
2. Talk to your installer for recommendations as to which films best suit your needs. In many instances the installation of a certified safety film can bring glass up to Grade A safety level under Australian Standard AS1288. If your installation requires Grade A compliance then mention this to your installer and confirm that they have a good understanding of the requirements under AS1288. *Note that window film installers are typically not certified building inspectors / glass auditors so if in doubt as to the applicability of a Grade A safety film installation we recommend you seek the advice of a building inspector / auditor who will determine what the film installer is required to fit and where.*
3. Ask to see literature from the manufacturer to verify safety performance claims
4. Check whether your installer provides Grade A safety labels as a good practice and note that all Grade A compliant installations under the Australian Standards must be labelled on each pane where safety film is fitted. An example of a Grade A compliant label is shown here:



About window film

Window film, or window tint as it used to be known, has come a long way since its introduction in 1961 for the NASA lunar project to reject heat. Advanced technologies mean the films now offer a staggering variety of shades, colours and performance levels. The best products are covered by a warranty, in some residential cases a lifetime warranty, and are guaranteed to survive the harsh Australian climate with scratch resistant coatings for protection and metallic layers for colour stability.

About WFAANZ

A non-profit organisation, WFAANZ is dedicated to upholding an industry standard of product and installation in Australia and New Zealand, while promoting the performance, values and cost effectiveness of window film. The association sets a strict code of ethics and conduct for its members, which is why home and car owners are advised to seek out WFAANZ installer and manufacturer members for assurance of quality.

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