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

While parents may be very safety conscious, short of boarding up all windows, it's almost impossible to keep children and glass apart. New homes have mandated safety glass in all windows, but this is not necessarily so for older homes built prior to 1989.

Accidents are unavoidable, and no one wants to stop children playing backyard cricket or footy, but you can greatly reduce the risk of serious injury as a result of shattered windows 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. This means that instead of sharp shards flying out from a breakage, the film holds shattered pieces in place until the pane can be mended.

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, a requirement for all pre-schools and schools and a must for homes with children. 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 reduces 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. "Retrofitting the right safety film can ensure your windows 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".

Hiring a professional with the necessary experience and knowledge to install the right safety film is essential, as mistakes during its application could compromise efficacy.

Finding the right installer

1. Go to the WFAANZ [member directory](#) for a list of installers near you who abide by a strict code of practice
2. Ask your installer for advice on which films best suit your needs.
3. Confirm he or she has a thorough understanding of the building code, particularly AS1288, which is the standard relating to window safety.
4. They should be able to confirm in writing you will comply with the building code once the film is applied.
5. If they cannot do this, seek advice from a building inspector or auditor who will determine what the film installer is required to fit and where.
6. Ask to see literature from the manufacturer to verify safety performance claims.
7. Check whether your installer provides Grade A safety labels, as the one shown here, which will verify the window will meet the relevant [Australian Standard for window safety \(AS1288\)](#).

In 2009 the Herbert family, living in Collaroy on Sydney's Northern Beaches, installed safety and solar film onto 15 sliding glass doors in their home after their then nine-year-old son ran into a glass door which shattered around him.



Mrs Herbert explains "My son was playfully running through the house and he ran straight into one of our sliding glass doors upstairs. He was lucky as he bounced back from the door and survived the incident with just a few cuts. The door smashed completely though, and I was horrified at the dangerous shards of glass that I cleaned up. The accident could have been a lot worse.

"This made me aware of the serious danger and I knew I needed to do something about the 15 glass doors in our home" continues Mrs Herbert. "When the glass company replaced the glass in the door they recommended I look into safety window film as a convenient and inexpensive option."

Mrs Herbert comments "Our upstairs living area catches the afternoon sun so it used to get extremely hot. We used solar control safety film up there. Now I know it's safer, plus it's much cooler and more comfortable on hot days. We now don't need to worry about curtains or blinds to block the sun, or our view."

About window film

Window film, or window tint as it used to be known, has come a long way since first used by NASA in 1961 on the lunar project to reject heat. Advanced technologies mean a vast range of shades, colours and performance levels are now available to suit a variety of needs. 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. As well, the residential installation of an independently-rated solar control film (rated under the [Window Energy Rating Scheme](#)) by an accredited professional will entitle you to an energy certificate that will add value to your home. Visit www.wfaanz.org.au for more information.

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.