

Cord and Drawstrings on Children's Clothing Overview of Risks Presented by Common Non-Compliances

Market surveillance authorities in 11 European countries carried out a joint action on non-compliant cords and drawstrings in children's clothes in 2009. This paper shows the most dangerous risks that arise when the clothes do not comply with the European safety requirements as laid down in the standard EN 14682.

The paper concentrates on the non-compliances that were found to be the most common and dangerous. It does not pretend to give a full overview of all risks associated with cords and drawstrings on children's clothes.

DISCLAIMER: This document presents a number of risks that arise when children's clothes do not meet the European safety requirements.

It does not present an exhaustive overview of risks or safety requirements related to cords and drawstrings on children's clothes.

Users should consult the European standard EN 14682 for all the safety requirements for cords and drawstrings on children's clothes.

Top-5 hazards

- Long cords in hoods or around the neck of children's clothing present a risk of strangulation or hanging of the child.
- Elastic cords near the face of a child represent a risk of injuries to the eyes or teeth, if the cord is caught and slaps back to hit the child.
- Long strings, particularly in the back of children's clothes, present a risk of serious injury as they may get trapped in the doors of vehicles, when the child alights causing the child to be dragged or pulled along with the vehicle.
- Long sashes, tied belts or cords or drawstrings around the waist area present a risk of the child being trapped during play.
- Long cords or drawstrings trailing below the sleeves or lower hems of children's clothes represent a risk of injuries during play or bicycling as they may become entangled and cause the child to fall.

Pictures with examples of non-compliant clothes that violate these requirements are shown in the following pages.

Overview of common non-compliances

The following list shows examples of garments that have been banned by European authorities because they are unsafe. The list is not exhaustive.

Hood and neck

- ***Cords or drawstrings in hoods or around the neck on garments for children up to 7 years pose a risk for strangulation if the string gets caught around the neck of the child while sleeping.***



EN 14682, clauses 3.2.1 – 3.2.5 present the requirements for cords and drawstrings in the hood and neck area for clothes for children under 7 years.

- ***Long cords or drawstrings with free ends in hoods or around the neck on clothes for children between 7 and 14 years pose a risk for hanging if they become trapped e.g. in playground equipment during play***



EN 14682, clauses 3.3.1 – 3.3.4 present the requirements for cords and drawstrings in the hood and neck area for clothes for children between 7 and 14 years.

- ***Loose ends in the neck on halter neck-style children's clothes can get entrapped during play and cause strangulation***



EN 14682, clause 3.3.5 presents the detailed requirement.

Chest and waist

- ***Long cords or drawstrings in the chest or around the waist can get entrapped during play and cause injuries when the child falls***



Note: Sashes and tied belts are permitted with certain restrictions.

EN 14682, clauses 3.4.1 – 3.4.2 present the requirements for cords and drawstrings in the chest and waist area.

- ***Tied belts or sashes that are too long*** can get entangled in playground equipment or when the child bicycles, causing serious injuries when the child falls



EN 14682, clauses 3.4.3 – 3.4.5 present the requirements for tied belts or sashes.

Back

- ***Cords or strings emerging from the back of the garment or intended to be tied on the back*** can get entrapped in doors of vehicles when the child alights, so the child is seriously injured when dragged along after the vehicle



Note: Sashes or tied belts are permitted with certain restrictions.

EN 14682, clauses 3.6.1 – 3.6.2 present the requirements for cords and drawstrings in the back.

Cords or drawstrings trailing below the garment

- ***Cords or drawstrings hanging below the sleeves*** can get entangled during play or in doors so that the child falls and gets injured



EN 14682, clauses 3.7.1 – 3.7.4 present the requirements for cords and drawstrings on sleeves.

- ***Cords or drawstrings hanging below the lower hem or cords or drawstrings trailing at the bottom hem of long-legged trousers that hang outside the garment*** are dangerous because they can get entangled during bicycling or play so the child falls and gets injured.



EN 14682, clauses 3.5.1 – 3.5.4 present the requirements for cords and drawstrings at the lower hem of garments that hang below the crotch area.



Other parts of the garment

- **Long cords or drawstrings in other parts of children's clothes** are dangerous because they can get entangled during play so the child falls and gets injured.



EN 14682, clause 3.8 presents the requirements for cords and drawstrings in other parts of the children's clothes.

General

- **Three-dimensional objects or knots at the end of cords and drawstrings** increase the risk that the string is trapped e.g. in playground equipment



EN 14682, clauses 3.1.1 – 3.1.2 present the requirements.

- When **drawstrings** are permitted, they **must be attached to the garment**. If not, the risk that one end of the drawstring is pulled out and gets entangled during play increases.

EN 14682, clause 3.1.3 presents the requirements.

Explanations

Cord or drawstring?

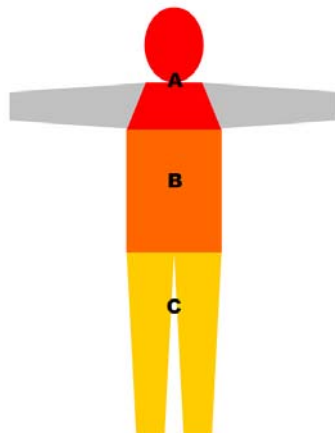


A **cord** is defined as a cord, chain, ribbon, string or tape of fixed length.

A **drawstring** is defined as a cord, chain, ribbon, string or tape that passes through a channel, loop(s) or eyelet(s) on the garment.

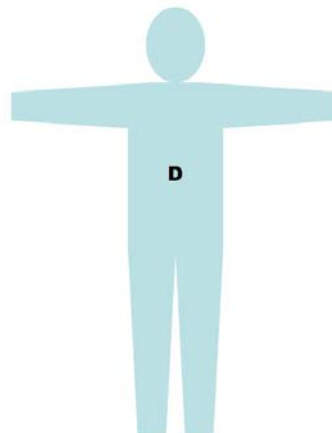


Which part of the body?



Front


A = hood and neck
B = chest and waist
C = below hip



Back

D = back

EN 14682, clauses 2.1 – 2.20 present all definitions.



Background information

Legislation

Children's clothes fall under the scope of the General Product Safety Directive.

Children's clothes must be safe to be legally placed on the European market. It is the responsibility of the economic operators to ensure that they are.

Cords and drawstrings on children's clothes can be presumed to be safe if they meet the requirements of EN 14682.

In practice, this would most often mean that a producer is acting "in good faith" if a garment meets the requirements on EN 14682. The authorities can still take measures against the garment if it turns out to be dangerous despite all the producer's efforts. This could be the case if a certain risk is not addressed in the standard.

If a garment does not meet the requirements in EN 14682, the authority shall always carry out a risk assessment to decide how serious the risk associated with the non-compliance is.

PROSAFE

The joint action is coordinated by PROSAFE, "The Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe". It is a non-profit organisation bringing together market surveillance officers from all over Europe and across the world.

The joint action is supported financially by the European Commission, DG SANCO.

The RAPEX reports on those children's clothes presenting serious risks to the consumer can be found on the European Commission's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/rapex_archives_en.cfm