

# Rest easy, **bunk bed safety**

A compliance guide to bunk bed safety  
for short-term rental accommodation



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Great state. Great opportunity.

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## What is changing?

From 21 October 2013 bunk beds supplied in short-term rental accommodation in Queensland will have to meet mandatory safety standards.

The purpose of the new Fair Trading (Safety Standards) Regulation 2011 covering bunk beds supplied in short-term rental accommodation is to keep children safe while they are staying away from home. Space-saving bunk beds are quite common in short-term rental accommodation such as holiday homes, school camps, student accommodation, tourist parks and to a lesser extent rental units.

Bunk beds are involved in many preventable childhood injuries. Approximately 450 children are treated each year in Queensland hospital emergency departments as a result of an injury related to bunk beds. 85% of the injuries are the direct result of a fall from a bunk bed, with most injuries suffered by children aged between 5-9 years old.

Although parents can control the quality of the bunk beds in their home, they have less influence over beds used in rental accommodation. The option of a bunk bed may also be a novelty to children who want to sleep on the top bunk. It's important for industry operators to get behind the new regulation to ensure their young visitors sleep safely.

**Short-term rental accommodation providers are encouraged to incorporate the new bunk bed regulation into their existing safety compliance programs as soon as possible.**

## Definitions

Under the new Fair Trading (Safety Standards) Regulation 2011 short-term accommodation is defined as 'accommodation supplied in trade or commerce for a period of 60 days or less'. The new law applies to people who provide short-term accommodation services, where the accommodation could be used by people under 16 years of age.

## Commencement date

The regulation will commence on 21 October 2013. However, short-term accommodation providers are strongly encouraged to make any necessary changes to their compliance programs so that their bunk beds conform with the new mandatory safety standards as soon as possible. The compliance checklist at the back of this document will help you check existing bunk beds.

## Key features of a product safety compliance program

### Staff training

It is especially important to ensure that all staff are aware of the new mandatory standards and receive clear instruction on what their role will be to make sure that your business meets its legal obligations. Effective staff training helps prevent any unintentional breaches of the law.

Training can be achieved through formal education, short course training or work experience.

Staff training should be assessed for effectiveness and updated as required.

### Dedicated compliance officer

Compliance with the law is everyone's responsibility. However having a dedicated compliance officer can centralise your compliance functions so that important pieces of gathered intelligence don't fall through the cracks and remain unresolved.

The compliance officer should be responsible for the development, implementation and maintenance of your compliance program. **If the compliance officer is not the owner of the business then that person should regularly report to the owner on the progress of the compliance program.**

## Regular reviews

It's important to conduct regular reviews of your safety compliance program to make sure that any new safety issues are identified, corrected and preventative action taken. Periodic audits also help you to identify areas for improvement. The attached checklist could be used when doing the audits.

## How to handle complaints and reports of injuries

Complaints provide you with a valuable source of customer feedback and form an essential basis for you to review the safety of the products and services you provide to people visiting your premises.

It's important for your business to develop procedures for recording, storing and responding to any safety complaints. Your business should also be able to generate reports on its complaint data to help identify any emerging safety issues. That way you will be able to minimise any potential risks (such as safety breaches), take prompt action to fix the problem and reduce the risk of a similar failure occurring.

*ISO 10002 Quality management-Customer satisfaction—Guidelines for complaints handling* sets out some benchmarks on how to set up an effective complaints handling system.

## Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting of serious injuries and deaths associated with consumer goods or services was introduced as part of the Australian Consumer Law which commenced on 1 January 2011.

As a result, suppliers of product related services are required to report the death, serious injury or illness of any person that they become aware of where that person believes the death, serious injury or illness was caused by the use of a consumer good that they supplied.

Serious illness or injury means an acute physical injury or illness requiring medical or surgical treatment by, or under the supervision of, a qualified doctor or nurse.

A supplier of product related services is required to submit a report within two days of becoming aware of a reportable incident. Suppliers can do this using the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) online form, which is available on the Product Safety Australia website [www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/982086](http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/982086)

For more information on mandatory reporting, please read the Mandatory Reporting Guidelines which can be viewed on the Product Safety Australia website [www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/984082](http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/984082)

## Resources

For complete information about all the mandatory requirements for bunk beds for short-term rental accommodation you need to read the following documents:

### **Fair Trading (Safety Standards) Regulation 2011**

The new bunk bed mandatory safety standard for short-term rental accommodation in Queensland calls up nationally mandated clauses (and variations) of the Australian and New Zealand Standard for bunk beds (AS/NZS 4220:1994). A copy of the regulation is available on the Queensland Legislation website [www.legislation.qld.gov.au](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au)

### **Commonwealth Consumer Protection Notice No. 1 of 2003**

Mandates key provisions of the Australian and New Zealand Standard for bunk beds (AS/NZS 4220:1994). A copy of the notice is available on the Product Safety Australia website [www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/974795/fromItemId/971372](http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/974795/fromItemId/971372)

### **Australian and New Zealand Standard for bunk beds (AS/NZS 4220:1994)**

A copy of the Australian safety standard can be purchased through the SAI Global Infostore [www.saiglobal.com](http://www.saiglobal.com), call 131 242 or email [sales@saiglobal.com](mailto:sales@saiglobal.com). Please note there is a cost associated with this.

### **Australian Standards Handbook - HB 93-2011 Bunk beds for the short-term rental accommodation industry.**

This very useful Standards Australia handbook provides guidance for suppliers of bunk beds in short-term rental accommodation and can be purchased from SAI Global Infostore [www.saiglobal.com](http://www.saiglobal.com), call 131 242 or email [sales@saiglobal.com](mailto:sales@saiglobal.com)

### **Compliance checklist**

This is included at Appendix A of this guide. It has been produced by the Queensland Office of Fair Trading and is intended to assist short-term rental accommodation operators to self-assess their existing bunk beds.

The checklist is not legal advice but is intended as general information on whether your bunk beds meet the key requirements of the safety standard.

For general information about bunk bed safety refer to the Office of Fair Trading website [www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au](http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au)

### **Safetyzone and Smart Business Bulletin e-newsletters**

To stay up-to-date with the latest Office of Fair Trading information subscribe to:


- Safetyzone
- Smart Business Bulletin.

Smart Business Bulletin is an electronic newsletter for Queensland businesses. It will keep you up-to-date with relevant business news, as well as providing business tips and features to help you make your business a success.

Safetyzone is an electronic newsletter about all things product safety. Further updates on the implementation of this legislation will be posted in future editions.

Visit the Office of Fair Trading website [www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au](http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au) to subscribe.

## **Contact us**

-  13 QGOV (13 74 68)
-  [safety@deedi.qld.gov.au](mailto:safety@deedi.qld.gov.au)
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-  [facebook.com/fairtradingqld](https://facebook.com/fairtradingqld)
-  [twitter.com/fairtradingqld](https://twitter.com/fairtradingqld)

## **SAI Global**

For copies of mandatory Australian/New Zealand Standards, contact SAI Global on 13 1242 or visit the SAI Global website [www.saiglobal.com/shop](http://www.saiglobal.com/shop)

# Appendix A

## A compliance checklist on bunk bed safety for short-term rental accommodation



This bunk bed checklist is intended to help you assess whether a bunk bed complies with the requirements of the Queensland Fair Trading (Safety Standards) Regulation 2011.

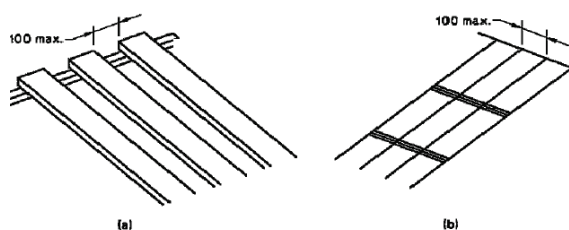
### Important things to note

1. Under the Fair Trading (Safety Standards) Regulation 2011, short-term accommodation is defined as ‘accommodation supplied in trade or commerce for a period of 60 days or less’. The new law applies to people who provide short-term accommodation services, where the accommodation could be used by people under 16 years of age.
2. A bunk bed is:
  - a) A set of components that are assembled or are ready for assembly into single beds or double/single combination beds which will be stacked one over the other; or
  - b) Any single bed, other than a hospital bed, where the upper surface of the mattress base is at least 800 mm above the floor surface.

### Critical compliance requirements

#### 1. Mattress base

Is the width between the timber slats, wire stringers in a wire mesh base or other structural component of the mattress base no greater than 100mm?



DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES  
FIGURE 3 MAXIMUM WIDTH BETWEEN MATTRESS BASE MEMBERS  
COPYRIGHT

Please tick the appropriate option.

Yes

No

N/A

If no, proposed action:

## Critical compliance requirements

### 2. Safety barriers/guardrails (roll-off hazard)

Please tick the appropriate option. See also point 4.

**The top bunk bed has guardrails on all four sides.**

Note: Gaps of between 300mm to 400mm are allowed to provide access to the bunk bed by a ladder.

OR

**A wall takes the place of a guardrail.**

If a wall takes the place of a guardrail, that wall is taken to be a safety barrier for a bunk bed if the bunk bed:

- is built into the wall; or
- is permanently fixed to the wall;

and the wall has no large gaps/entrapment hazards (as per point 4) or protrusions (as per point 3).

OR

**The wall is not continuous from the floor to the ceiling.**

(e.g. short partition wall)

The wall should have:

- no accessible protrusions (edges or points) greater than 8mm; and
- a minimum vertical distance of 260mm between the top of the partition wall and the upper surface of the mattress base.

OR

**The wall has a window in the area in which the bunk bed is located.**

A wall with a window should have:

- no accessible protrusions (edges or points) greater than 8mm; and
- a minimum vertical distance of 260mm between the bottom of the window ledge and the upper surface of the mattress base.

If neither, proposed action:

Please tick the appropriate option.

**The guardrails are permanently fixed to the bunk bed structure.**

OR

**The bunk bed has a detachable safety rail(s) to allow temporary removal and replacement.**

If a guardrail is detachable, it should be incapable of removal by a force of 100 Newtons (i.e. just over 10 kgs) or cannot be easily removed with child-like force applied to the guardrail in any direction.

If neither, proposed action:

## Critical compliance requirements

<p>Is the upper surface of the guardrail smooth and continuous and free from protrusions or other potential snag points?</p>	<p><i>Please tick the appropriate option.</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>      N/A <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, proposed action:</p>
<p>The vertical distance between the top of the MATTRESS and the top of the GUARDRAIL must be at least 160mm. This is to stop the child rolling out of the top bunk.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>      N/A <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, proposed action:</p>
<p>Is the access opening for ladder entry to the top bunk between 300mm and 400mm? <i>(measure at the base of the opening)</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>      N/A <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, proposed action:</p>



## Critical compliance requirements

### 3. Protrusions *(head injury and strangulation hazard)*

Is the area inside the bunk bed free from protrusions which could injure an occupant (especially his or her head) if the occupant fell or rolled onto the protrusion (other than dome nuts less than 5mm in height)?

Please tick the appropriate option.

Yes

No

N/A

If no, proposed action:

Are external protrusions *(edges or points)* less than 8mm or designed to avoid catching onto an occupant's clothing?

Yes

No

N/A

If no, proposed action:

### 4.0 Gaps *(head entrapment hazard)*

In any area 600mm or more from the floor, are there any gaps sized between 95mm to 230mm diameter in any part of the bed (excluding the ladder opening)?

Yes

No

N/A

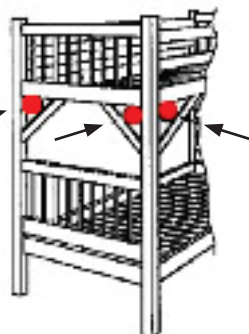
If yes, proposed action:

#### 4.1 Reducing configuration gaps

Are there any gaps with a reducing configuration diameter that allows the passage of a 230 probe (representing a child's head) but does not allow its removal through the reduced configuration. An overview of safe gaps on bunk beds is provided on the next page.

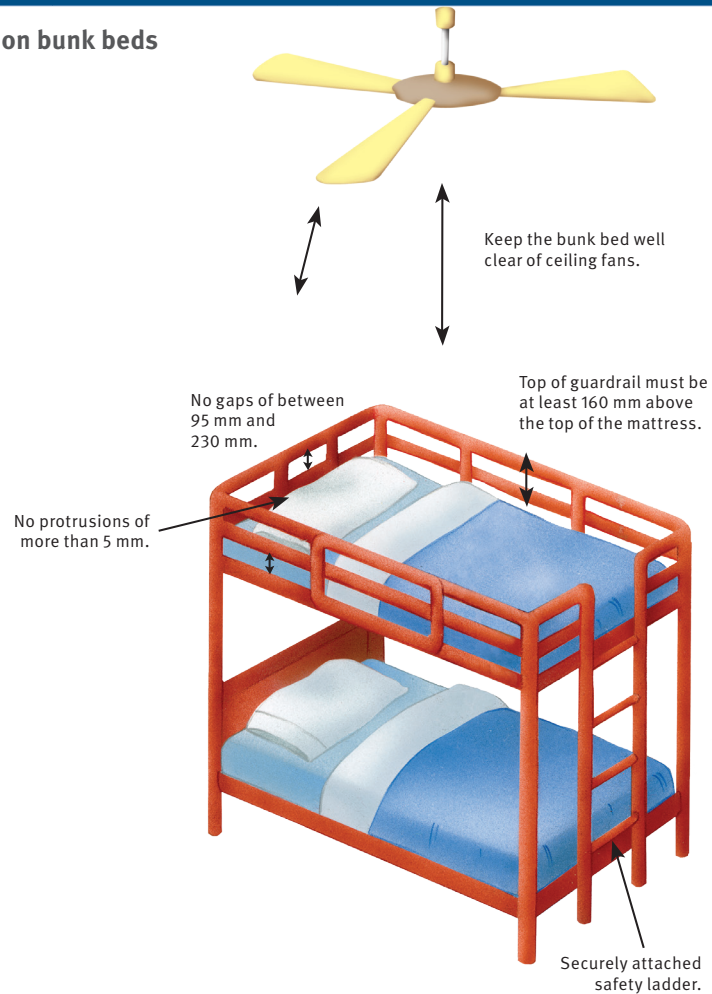
#### 4.2 Reducing configuration gaps

Note: A 'reducing configuration' is a design where the gap reduces incrementally from a larger to a progressively smaller opening.



## Critical compliance requirements

### Overview of safe gaps on bunk beds



### 5. Recommended warning notice

*(not mandatory)*

Is there a prominent warning notice attached or next to the bunk bed? (e.g. notice below)

#### **WARNING**

Top bunks and elevated beds are dangerous and are not recommended for children under the age of nine.

Yes

No

N/A

If no, proposed action

Checked by:

Date:

Comments/further action: