

# Children's clothing

**This advice is designed to provide basic guidance to traders. It is not a complete or authoritative statement of the law.**

This factsheet is designed to help manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers of clothing understand the safety concerns and important legal requirements. It will also help inform consumers.

## The law



- The General Product Safety Regulations 2005 - covering ALL products
- BS EN 14682: 2014 - Cords and drawstrings on children's clothing
- PD CEN/TR 16792:2014 Safety of children's clothing - Recommendations for the design and manufacture of children's clothing - Mechanical safety
- The Nightwear (Safety) Regulations 1985
- BS EN 14878 Textiles - Burning behaviour of children's nightwear - Specification

Responsibilities of manufacturers, importers and distributors

**General Product Safety Regulations 2005** ensures all products intended for or likely to be used by consumers under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions are safe. For more information see the Guidance notes for the [General Product Safety Regulations 2005](#).

**Nightwear (Safety) Regulations 1985** prohibit the supply of children's nightwear (other than pyjamas, babies' garments and cotton terry towelling bath robes) that do not meet flammability performance requirements. There are also specific labelling requirements. For more information see the [Guide to Nightwear \(Safety\) Regulations](#).

Apart from the Nightwear Regulations, there are no other specific regulations covering the safety of children's clothing. All other aspects of safety is covered by the General Product Safety Regulations 2005. These Regulations place a responsibility on businesses to supply safe goods.

In assessing the safety of a product the courts would have regard to any relevant published standards and codes of practice.

### **BS EN 14682: 2014 - Cords and drawstrings on children's clothing**

The aim of BS EN 14862 is to minimise the risk of accidental entrapment by cords or drawstrings on children's clothing intended for children up to age 14, taking into account:

- the child's age
- normal behaviour and activities of children for their age and stage of development, for example playing in playgrounds, climbing trees, travelling by bus or train, ability to look after themselves, and where relevant, level of supervision

National accident statistics indicate that serious accidents involving cords and drawstrings on children's clothing fall into two main groups by age of child:

1. younger children: entrapment of hood cords in playground equipment such as slides, resulting in fatalities
2. older children and young persons: entrapment of cords and strings from the waist and lower hems of garments in moving vehicles such as bus doors, ski lifts and

bicycles resulting in severe injuries or death from being dragged along or run over by the vehicle

## **PD CEN/TR 16792:2014 Safety of children's clothing - Recommendations for the design and manufacture of children's clothing - Mechanical safety**

When designing children's clothing, it is essential to take into consideration the behaviour of children, whose need for exploration and challenge drives them to use items in new and different ways. One common factor children share is that they are unaware of cause and effect and are therefore substantially less cautious than adults in relation to hazards.

This Technical Report is intended for use at all stages of the clothing supply chain, including use by designers, specifiers and manufacturers of children's clothing. It is also intended to be used by importers, distributors and retailers to assist them in the selection of clothing that does not present a hazard.

You should check the latest position in respect of Standards, Technical Reports, Codes of Practices etc. with the relevant publisher e.g. BSI.

### **Hood and neck area - (for 'young child' eg 0-7 yrs)**

There must be NO drawstrings or cords in this area.

Adjustable tabs allowed - maximum length 75mm.

Shoulder straps must be a continuous length attached at both ends.

Decorative straps and embellishments - NO free ends longer than 75mm and fixed loops maximum circumference 75mm (circumference = twice the flat length).

Halter neck style - NO free ends.

### **Hood and neck area - (for 'older child' eg 7-14 years)**

Drawstrings must have NO free ends (where there is an adjustable loop, this loop should not protrude when opening is at its largest, when adjusted to size intended to fit, circumference of loop shall be 150mm maximum).

Cords and tabs used to fasten or adjust the size of the garment and decorative cords - maximum length 75mm.

Free ends of shoulder straps, no longer than 140mm from tied point and fixed loops - maximum circumference 75 mm.

Halter neck style - NO free ends.

### **Waist area**

Free ends of drawstrings - maximum length 140mm when garment is open to its largest and laid flat and when closed to the intended size maximum length 280mm.

Belts or sashes intended to be tied at the back of the garment should not be more than 360mm in length (for 'young children' they also must not hang below the hem) when untied.

Those intended to be tied at the front of the garment should be no more than 360mm in length. Measurements will be from the point where they are to be tied.

### **Lower hem (below crotch)**

Drawstrings and adjustable or decorative cords:

- on the lower edges of garments (where lower edge is situated below the crotch) should not hang below the lower edge
- from the bottom hem, where the garment is designed to finish at the ankle, should be totally inside the garment

Stirrups at the hem of trousers are allowed

### **Back area**

Drawstrings and adjustable or decorative cords emerging from the back or to be tied at the back are NOT allowed.

Tied belts or sashes are allowed (see 'Waist area' above)

## **Sleeves**

Drawstrings and adjustable or decorative cords:

at the lower edge of long sleeved garments, should NOT hang below that edge when fastened

on short sleeved garments, finishing above the elbow, open to its largest and laid flat, should be no more than 75mm in length for 'young children' and no more than 140mm for 'older children'

**Note:** The above **will not apply** to childcare articles, shoes, gloves, hats, scarves, neckties, belts and braces, religious and celebratory clothing, specialist sportswear, theatrical costumes for performances and aprons.

## **Further hazards**

Any small parts that have been attached to the garment must be secure (not detach at less than 70 Newtons, which is a force of approximately 7kg) to avoid becoming a **choking hazard**. Small parts are very dangerous to children under 36 months. Items to bear in mind include; any buttons, beads, bows, tassels, pom-poms, sequins, diamantes, fasteners and labels.

## **Retailers**

Check for drawstrings and labelling before you buy. Buy from a reputable source. Any safety complaints/returns need to be dealt with, and your HQ or supplier will need to be informed.