



# Toppling Furniture product – consumer safety messaging

## Stakeholder toolkit

### 1. Purpose

Throughout June 2024, the ACCC is promoting consumer safety messaging about toppling furniture through a range of communication channels. The aim of this education campaign is to raise consumer awareness about the risks associated with toppling furniture and encourage consumer action to help mitigate those risks by encouraging consumers to:

- consider safety prior to purchase
- ensure furniture at risk of toppling is correctly secured
- encourage safer use of furniture, such as weight distribution of stored items and not placing heavy items on top of furniture.

We are also raising awareness of the [information standard for toppling furniture](#), which was made by the Assistant Treasurer on 3 May 2024, following the ACCC's recommendation.

To amplify the ACCC's consumer safety messaging about toppling furniture, we are engaging with key stakeholders, and encourage you to amplify our message through sharing and distributing through your networks.

We seek your assistance to promote educating consumers on the risks of toppling furniture and ways to help mitigate these risks. We are sharing this toolkit to help you communicate on this important issue. This toolkit provides information and collateral to assist you to promote these safety messages and ensure consistency.

We encourage you to share the key messages in this toolkit with your networks including through newsletter distribution, social media and any consumer networks you engage with.

### 2. Background

The ACCC's 2023-24 Product Safety Priorities include a focus on young children's product safety, which encompasses compliance, enforcement and education initiatives to raise awareness of the risks posed by toppling furniture. Our 2024-25 Compliance and

Enforcement Priorities include consumer product safety issues for young children, with a focus on the safety of nursery products including furniture, infant self-feeding and infant sleep products.

The ACCC is aware of at least 28 deaths associated with toppling furniture in Australia since 2000. We estimate toppling furniture causes at least 900 injuries a year that require medical treatment. The estimated cost to government is around \$8 million dollars a year, and the true cost to families, caregivers and communities is incalculable.

Freestanding storage furniture such as chests of drawers, wardrobes, and bookcases pose the greatest risk of toppling and causing injury or death. Children aged up to 4 years are most at risk, with older Australians also vulnerable.

The ACCC's key concerns about consumer awareness are that:

- consumers may be unaware of the risks posed by toppling furniture
- consumers may not have the tools/knowledge to secure furniture or otherwise mitigate the risks of toppling furniture
- consumers may be concerned about securing furniture in rental properties.

This dedicated toppling furniture education campaign which will run throughout June 2024 forms part of the ACCC's ongoing work to promote and raise awareness about toppling furniture issues and address the risks presented by toppling furniture.

## **Information Standard**

The new information standard for toppling furniture requires suppliers to provide safety warnings and advice about how to reduce toppling furniture incidents to consumers before, during and after purchasing furniture.

The toppling furniture information standard will require suppliers to:

- attach a permanent warning label to furniture;
- include safety information and advice about anchoring furniture in manuals and assembly instructions; and
- provide warnings about the hazards of toppling furniture in furniture stores and online.

The standard applies to chests of drawers, wardrobes, bookcases, hall tables, display cabinets, buffets and sideboards with a height of 686mm or more, and entertainment units of any height.

Suppliers have a 12-month transition period to implement the new information and labelling requirements and must comply with these requirements from 4 May 2025.

## **3. Timing**

### **Completed education activities**

We have updated the following pages on the Product Safety Australia website:

- [Toppling Furniture](#) – provides information about the requirements of the information standard.
- [Toppling Furniture and televisions consumer advice](#) – provides information about the risks and hazards associated with toppling furniture and televisions, and guidance to consumers about how to choose safe products, how to use products safely, and the importance of securing these items.

## Planned education activities

- Social media messaging (both organic and paid content) – June 2024
- Distribution of newsletters through Product Safety Matters and Small Business newsletters – June 2024
- Third-party content through Bounty Parents and Kidspot – June 2024


## 4. Social media key messages and images

The social media posts will be shared across ACCC Product Safety’s [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.


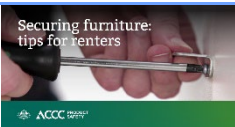
### Social media schedule

We encourage you to share the social media posts to promote the consumer safety messaging in accordance with the schedule below and make use of the hashtag **#topplingfurniturestafety**.

We will also be running paid advertising versions of the posts; however, these are not shareable.

Platform	Date	Tile	Facebook Copy	Twitter Copy
Facebook, Twitter	17/6		<p>How secure is the furniture around your home? Sadly, toppling furniture has killed at least 28 people in Australia since 2000 and causes nearly 20 injuries every week, with kids under 5 most at risk. Take a moment to review our tips on buying safer furniture below, and securing your TV and furniture to help ensure that your everyday furniture items don't pose a threat to people in your home.</p> <p><a href="#">Toppling furniture and televisions   Product Safety Australia</a></p>	<p>Sadly, toppling furniture has killed at least 28 people in Australia since 2000 and causes nearly 20 injuries every week, with kids under 5 most at risk. Take a moment to review our tips on buying safer furniture, and securing the furniture you own.</p> <p><a href="#">Toppling furniture and televisions   Product Safety Australia</a></p>

Facebook, Twitter	19/6		<p>Toppling furniture items can pose a serious safety risk, and heavy items placed on furniture such as TVs are also dangerous. If furniture becomes unstable, these products can fall off, causing serious injury. Secure your furniture, avoid placing heavy items on top of furniture, and anchor or wall-mount TVs. Take a moment to review our safety tips below.</p> <p><a href="#">Toppling furniture and televisions   Product Safety Australia</a></p>	<p>Toppling furniture items can pose a serious safety risk, and heavy items placed on furniture such as TVs can also pose a danger. Ensure you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure your furniture</li> <li>• Avoid placing heavy items on top of furniture</li> <li>• Anchor or wall-mount TVs if possible</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Toppling furniture and televisions   Product Safety Australia</a></p>
Facebook, Twitter	21/6		<p>Take the steps to secure furniture around your home - it might save a life. The best way to prevent furniture from tipping over is to attach it to the wall or floor. If anchoring hardware isn't included, you can buy it - and remember, you can use anchoring hardware for second-hand or owned furniture too. If you're not sure which product is right for your furniture, ask at your local hardware store, or ask a professional!</p> <p><a href="#">Toppling furniture and televisions   Product Safety Australia</a></p>	<p>Secure furniture to the wall or floor to help prevent an accident. Anchoring hardware can be bought if not included - and this hardware works for second-hand or owned furniture too. Not sure which product is right for your furniture? Ask a professional!</p> <p><a href="#">Toppling furniture and televisions   Product Safety Australia</a></p>

Facebook, Twitter	25/6		<p>Looking to buy a new piece of furniture for your home? Take a moment to review our buying tips below to help you to make furniture choices with safety in mind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine furniture to ensure stability</li> <li>• Pull out any top drawers of a chest of drawers or open doors on other furniture items, applying pressure to test stability</li> <li>• Make sure the drawers don't fall out easily, and look for drawer stops or interlocks if possible</li> <li>• Look for furniture with sturdy backing material</li> <li>• Look for low-set furniture, or furniture with a sturdy, stable and broad base</li> <li>• Look for furniture that comes with safety info or equipment to anchor it to the wall, &amp; seek out an anchoring kit if it's not included</li> <li>• Plan your purchase, looking for spots to anchor furniture to the wall or floor</li> </ul> <p>Learn more about toppling furniture safety below.</p> <p><a href="#">Toppling furniture and televisions   Product Safety Australia</a></p>	<p>Looking to buy a new piece of furniture for your home? Take a moment to review our buying tips below to help you to make furniture choices with safety in mind - learn more here:</p> <p><a href="#">Toppling furniture and televisions   Product Safety Australia</a></p>
Facebook, Twitter	27/6		<p>Renters often report having trouble securing furniture in their home. Remember that</p>	<p>Are you a renter that wants to secure furniture in</p>

			<p>some states have laws that make it easier for tenants to secure furniture, and all tenants can speak to their landlord or agent about installing anchoring devices to help ensure their family's safety. If you're unsure about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant, you can check local laws, or seek support from your local consumer protection agency below.</p> <p><a href="#">Toppling furniture and televisions   Product Safety Australia</a></p>	<p>your home? Speak to your landlord or agent about installing anchoring devices, and check local laws that may make it easier for you to secure furniture. Check your local laws here:</p> <p><a href="#">Toppling furniture and televisions   Product Safety Australia</a></p>
--	--	--	---	--

## 5. Newsletter article

The ACCC will also distribute a newsletter to further raise awareness and promote the campaign to a broad range of affected stakeholders via our Product Safety Matters newsletter. If you plan to share newsletter content, please consider using content below.



### Toppling furniture safety

Dear <<First Name>>,

The ACCC has been working to implement strategies to prevent injuries and deaths caused by toppling furniture.

Following a recommendation made by the ACCC, on 3 May 2024 the Assistant Treasurer made the [Consumer Goods \(Toppling Furniture\) Information Standard 2024 \(the Information Standard\)](#). To give suppliers time to comply, this Information Standard will come into effect after a 12-month transitional period. When the transition period ends on 4 May 2025, suppliers must meet the requirements of the Information Standard.

The ACCC is sharing important safety messages to help reduce the risk of toppling furniture.

### **Toppling furniture and televisions risks**

Toppling furniture and televisions cause injuries and deaths in Australia. Since 2000, at least 28 people, including 17 children under five, have died in Australia from toppling furniture, and each year more than 900 Australians suffer injuries requiring medical assistance from toppling furniture. Children aged up to 4 years are most at risk, with older Australians also vulnerable.

The majority of deaths involved storage furniture such as chests of drawers and bookshelves, televisions and the furniture on which televisions are placed. Design factors of such furniture can give rise to safety risks, and many people may not be aware of the safety risks or ways to help address these.

### **Advice for consumers**

We encourage consumers to think about safety when you're buying and using furniture and TVs, especially if you have young children in your home or who might visit.

Tips to reduce toppling furniture incidents in your home:

- The best way to prevent furniture from tipping over is to secure it to the wall or floor. If your furniture doesn't come with anchoring hardware you can buy this from a furniture retailer, hardware store or a specialty store for baby goods. You can also do this if you're securing furniture you've had for a while, or bought second-hand.
- If you're renting a home, contact your landlord or agent about installing anchor devices to the wall. In some states there are laws that make it easier for tenants to secure furniture to the wall for safety reasons.
- Place furniture on a flat, even surface where possible. Furniture is more unstable when placed on an uneven or soft surface, such as carpet or a rug. If you plan to place your furniture on carpet against a wall, check to make sure the carpet isn't bulging.
- Keep your heaviest items at the bottom of your drawers or shelves. Furniture that is top-heavy is easier to tip over.

- Do not place heavy items such as TVs or items that are attractive to children on top of furniture.
- Put locking devices on all drawers. They can help prevent children from opening them and using them as steps.

### **Next steps**

You can find more information on the [standard](#) and safety [tips](#) on the [Product Safety Australia website](#).

Kind regards,

Product Safety Australia  
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

## **6. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

If you receive questions from your stakeholders about toppling furniture issues, you can use this information to respond. This information can be passed on to contact centres, media teams and communication departments.

Please feel free to forward more difficult questions to the ACCC's toppling furniture team at [topplingfurniture@acc.gov.au](mailto:topplingfurniture@acc.gov.au).

### **What is toppling furniture?**

"Toppling furniture" is furniture that has a risk of tipping over and causing injuries or death if unsecured – such as chests of drawers, wardrobes, and bookcases.

### **Who is the ACCC?**

The ACCC is Australia's national competition, consumer, fair trading and product safety regulator. We:

- identify and address the risk of serious injury and death from safety hazards in consumer products. We work with other regulators to do this.
- review and update mandatory standards for product safety.
- negotiate, assess and check the effectiveness of voluntary product recalls.

<https://www.accc.gov.au/consumers/protecting-yourself/product-safety>



## **What makes furniture susceptible to toppling? What kind of furniture is at risk? Why does furniture topple/fall?**

Certain freestanding furniture items, such as unsecured chests of drawers, wardrobes, cabinets, entertainment units, hall tables, buffets, sideboards and bookcases can be dangerous if it falls or topples over.

These items are at greater risk of toppling when:

- they are not secured to the wall or floor;
- heavy items are placed near the top of the unit;
- they are placed on an uneven surface such as carpet;
- when drawers or doors are opened during normal use;
- additional weight makes the unit unstable, for example, a child climbing or reaching up for an item, can bring the weight of the unit forward making it unstable and causing it to fall (topple) over.

## **How can I prevent my furniture from toppling?**

Think about safety when you're buying furniture and TVs, especially if you have young children in your home or who might visit. When you're out shopping, use these tips to help you choose safer furniture.

- Examine the furniture to make sure it is stable.
- Pull out any top drawers of a chest of drawers or open doors on other furniture items and apply a little pressure to see how stable the furniture is.
- Make sure the drawers don't fall out easily.
- Look for built in drawer stops that limit how far drawers can be extended or interlocks that prevent more than one drawer being opened at a time.
- Look for furniture with sturdy backing material which increases stability.
- Look for low-set furniture, or furniture with a sturdy, stable and broad base. It's less likely to tip over.
- Look for furniture that comes with safety information or equipment to anchor it to the wall. If it doesn't, you can buy an anchoring kit. Ask a staff member if you need help to choose the right product for your home.
- Plan your purchase. Think about where the furniture will go. Can you anchor your furniture to the wall or floor?

You can also take steps to use the product safely to reduce the danger of toppling furniture in the home:

- Always secure free-standing furniture with an anchoring device.
- Place furniture on a flat, even surface where possible. Furniture is more unstable when placed on an uneven or soft surface, such as carpet or a rug.
- If you plan to place your furniture on carpet against a wall, check to make sure the carpet isn't bulging.

- Keep your heaviest items at the bottom of your drawers or shelves. Furniture that is top-heavy is easier to tip over.
- Don't place heavy items such as TVs or items that are attractive to children on top of furniture.
- Put locking devices on all drawers. They help prevent children from opening them and using them as steps.

## **How do I safely secure my furniture?**

Securing your furniture to a wall and floor can prevent it from toppling. If your furniture does not come with hardware to secure it, or you're securing furniture you've had for a while, or bought second hand, you can buy what you need from a furniture retailer or hardware store.

What you will need depends on what the wall or floor is made of, and what kind of furniture you need to secure. There are different kinds of wall and floor anchors available. If you are not sure, ask for advice from your local hardware store or a tradesperson.

## **Can I secure my furniture in a rental property?**

If you're renting a home, contact your landlord or agent about installing anchor devices to the wall. Explain why you want to secure your furniture and let them know you'll remove them at the end of your tenancy.

Recent changes to rental laws in NSW, WA and Victoria mean it's easier for tenants to request or make safety modifications to secure furniture. If you live in a state or territory where these changes haven't taken place, you may make a request to anchor furniture to your landlord or property manager. Contact the residential tenancies' authority in your state or territory or a legal services provider for guidance on your rights.

## **What is the ACCC doing to combat toppling furniture risks?**

Implementing strategies to prevent injuries and deaths caused by toppling furniture was an ACCC product safety priority from 2020-22 and is now part of the 2023-24 young children's product safety priority. The ACCC's 2024-25 Compliance and Enforcement Priorities also include consumer product safety issues for young children, with a focus on the safety of nursery products including furniture, encompass product safety risks posed by toppling furniture.

On 3 May 2024, Assistant Treasurer Stephen Jones made the *Consumer Goods (Toppling Furniture) Information Standard 2024* (the Information Standard). This decision follows the ACCC's recommendation to the Assistant Treasurer to make this standard.

The ACCC is considering further measures to improve safety outcomes for consumers, including potential mandatory safety requirements for high-risk furniture.

## **Who is most at risk of being injured from toppling furniture?**

There have been at least 28 deaths associated with toppling furniture since 2000 and toppling furniture causes at least 900 injuries a year that require medical treatment.

Small children are most at risk, however, older people are also at risk of injury or death from being struck or trapped by toppling furniture.

## **What do I do if a tip-over happens to me or someone I know?**

Immediately seek help and medical advice.

If possible, make a note of the situation and the brand and type of furniture involved and let the supplier and the ACCC know. The ACCC is also interested in near miss incidents even if no one is hurt. Your reports help the ACCC to identify safety issues that may present a concern and assess if further action should be taken. You can report an unsafe product to the ACCC [here](#).

## **7. Contact points**

You can email the ACCC's toppling furniture project team at [topplingfurniture@acc.gov.au](mailto:topplingfurniture@acc.gov.au).

**Thank you for helping to raise awareness about toppling furniture risks and safe use of furniture.**

We welcome any feedback you have about the materials or this toolkit.