

What the standards do for us

A major part of the Regulations deal with safety BS 8213- Part 1: 2004: Design for safety in use and during cleaning of windows, named as guidance within the Approved Documents.

In this increasingly litigious society a document which gives guidance on the simplest routes to compliance with safety requirements should not be ignored.

BS 8213 is aimed towards reducing the risk of accidents through a risk assessment approach at the design stage and at the same time pointing to the areas of responsibility for carrying out the actual risk assessment.

Amongst the "*Essential Considerations*" of BS 8213-1: 2004 are that the window be designed for:-

- a) Safety in use
- b) Safety when cleaning

[Nor are the British Standards alone in this commonsense guidance. The Housing Corporation, the government body responsible for much of the new build funding in social housing sector, in its 2003 "*Scheme Development Standards*" tests of compliance- essential items section makes remarkably similar demands on window safety.]

BS 8213-1, gives very straight forward guidance, as in section 8.2.1 which states:-

"Unless there is a safe external approach the window should be designed such that both external and internal surfaces can be cleaned from inside."

and when the window is fitted with friction hinges the *"gap between casement and frame should be at least 95 mm"*

Also in section 4.2 on risk assessments:-

"A risk assessment should be carried out, taking account of the relative priority needs established in each situation. For instance, unauthorized entry is not normally a risk with windows to the first floor and above unless there is a ready means of external access. Falls, however, even from relatively low heights, can have serious consequences..."

...The responsibility for the risk assessment should lie with the designer.

NOTE - In the case of domestic replacement windows the designer is the person or organization taking the order from the client."

It is better to be aware of this responsibility rather than ignore it. Ignorance is no defence in law particularly when you are being paid for your product or service. We would advise every reputable window company to obtain copies of the Building Regulations and the appropriate technical standards.

There is readily available guidance. Call the Customer Help Desk at Securistyle on T: 01242 221200, we would be happy to provide advice.