

# WESTPORT~NEWS

## **On the Home Front**

Bi-monthly column by: Linda Skolnick

### **Window Safety**

When I think about windows, and their safety, I think about the news reports about cases in New York City. I think about the apartment building there that had no window safety latches, and a toddler inadvertently falling out. I never think about it happening in Westport. But there is more to window safety than the obvious. And it doesn't only happen there...it could happen here!

Last week Fairfield County SAFE KIDS and Stamford Hospital teamed up for National Window Safety Week, and offered the following safety tips. You may be surprised about some very easy solutions to think about now, that can save a life later.

Firstly, be reminded that in the case of a fire, a window may be the only means of escape. Make sure your children know this, and that they also know how to properly and safely use a window.

When repainting your window trim or seals, insure that you do not inadvertently paint or nail them permanently shut. Otherwise, in case of an emergency you may be out of luck, or forced to actually break the window, which makes for a much more dangerous escape.

When young children are around, keep your doors and windows locked. If you need ventilation, open higher windows that a child will be unable to reach.

Set precedence and make rules against playing too close to windows and patio doors. Falling through broken glass is serious, and can be fatal.

Be aware of furniture placement near windows. Children may use furniture as a climbing aid to get close to out of reach windows.

If you have you children, and are considering installing a window guard system, insure that they are installed properly, and that they operate properly. For example, they should have a release mechanism that allows you to fully open the in case of fire. It is best to consult with the fire department or building code office to determine proper window guard placement.

You may already have either a window guard, or security grills and grates installed. Remember, they are useless when it comes to safety, unless they have a functioning release mechanism.

Insect screens are designed to prevent insects from entering your home while ventilating your house. They will not prevent a child from falling.

Fairfield County SAFE KIDS explains that, “the degree of injury from a window fall can be affected by the surface on which the victim falls. Shrubs and soft edging like wood chips or grass beneath windows may lessen the impact if a fall does occur.”

Finally, supervision is the key to prevention. Be aware of possible danger sites, and set a plan in place to avoid them. For further information, you can check out the Fairfield County SAFE KIDS website at [www.fcsafekids.org](http://www.fcsafekids.org).