



KEY MESSAGE

FALL PREVENTION AND THE PROTECTION OF OPENABLE WINDOWS

The National Construction Code specifies various requirements for the prevention of falls from openable windows. The intent of these requirements is to limit the risk of a person (especially a young child) falling through an openable window, and are divided into two categories;

1. All windows where the potential fall is four metres or more.
2. Windows in bedrooms of Class 1, 2, 3 and 4 buildings, and any room in Class 9b Early Child Care Centres where the potential fall is two metres or more.

Note: *The NSW Strata Schemes Management Regulation 2010 requires protection to windows in any room where the potential fall is over two metres.*

A window opening must be provided with protection where people could fall:

- Two metres or more from a floor through an openable window in a bedroom or any room in a class 9b child care facility or strata title unit in NSW,
or
- Four metres or more from a floor through an openable window in any other room.

Generally, the options provided by the NCC that are deemed to provide protection are:

- A fixed device attached to the openable part of a window,
or
- A fixed screen across the openable part of a window.

In either case, the device or screen must:

- Restrict any openings of the window or screen so that a 125 mm sphere cannot pass through,
and
- Resist an outward horizontal action of 250 N against the window being restrained by the device or screen.

It is permissible that a child resistant release mechanism be fitted so that the restriction may be removed, unlocked or overridden provided that:

- the opening is more than 865 mm from the floor and does not have any horizontal or near horizontal elements between 150 mm and 760 mm above the floor that can facilitate climbing.
or
- a barrier no less than 865 mm high is installed that does not permit a 125 mm sphere to pass through it and does not have any horizontal or near horizontal elements between 150 mm and 760 mm above the floor that facilitate climbing.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

It is the responsibility of the person fitting the device or screen to verify that it meets these requirements and provide evidence of compliance.

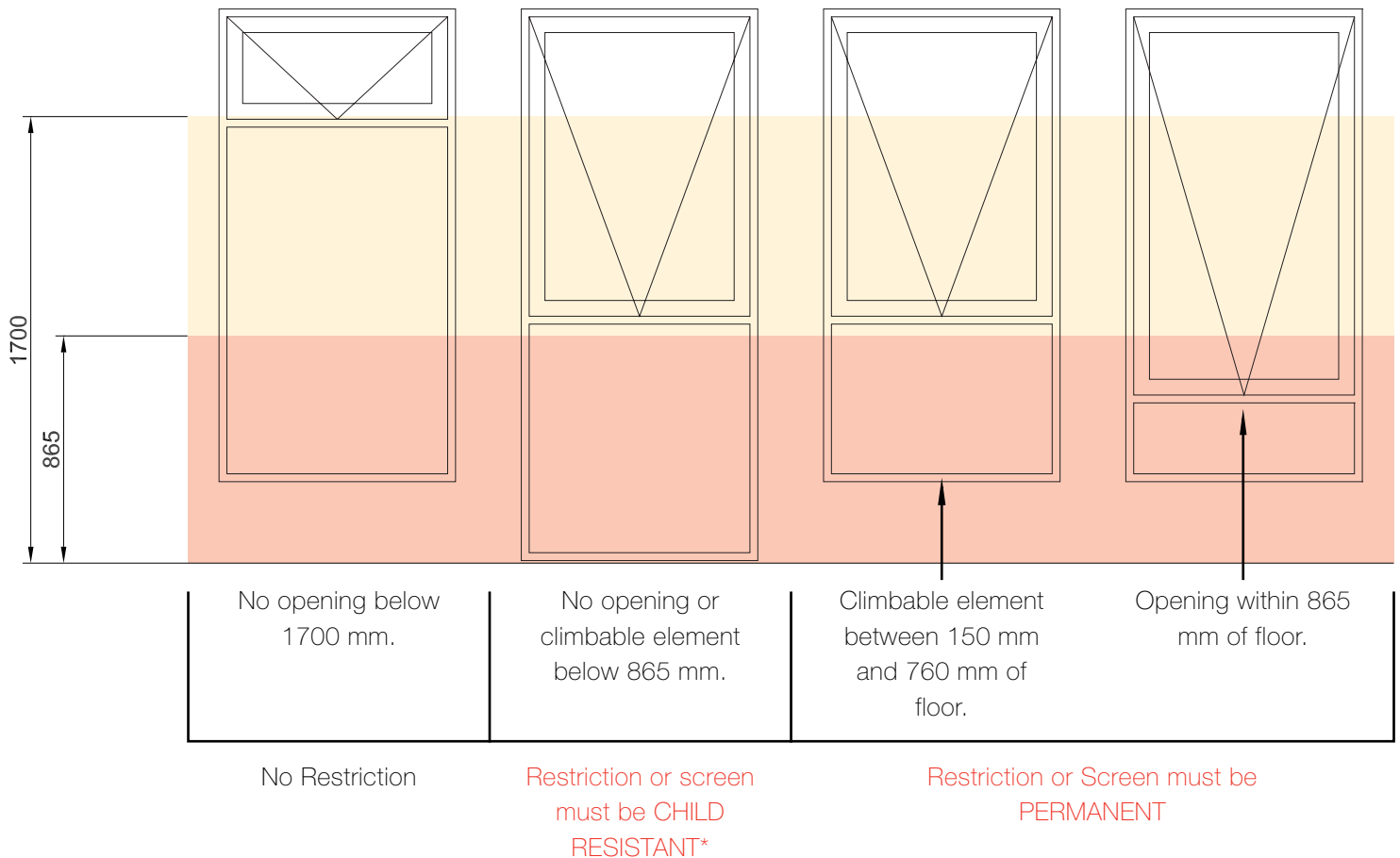
Standards Australia has recently released a public comment draft of **AS 4420.2 Windows - Methods of test Part 2: Openable Windows - Window Full Barrier Test and Force Test**. This new standard sets out methods for determining the performance of a barrier screen and a restricted window opening to a level of force specified in the NCC. The full standard is expected to be published later this year.



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Figure 1 Fall Prevention Requirements.



*Note: Only applicable in a bedroom or Class 9b Child Care Centre.

CHILD RESISTANT means that a key, Allen key, screwdriver, spanner or the coordinated use of two hands is required to open the window beyond 125 mm.

PERMANENT means that a restrictor or screen is securely fixed in position (e.g. a screen pop riveted to the window frame) so it cannot be unlocked, overridden, or is very difficult to remove without, for example, a drill.

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Figure 2 Flowchart to Determine Fall Prevention Requirements as Prescribed by the National Construction Code.

