



THE SAFE USE OF BUNK BEDS

Bunk beds are frequently used as a sleeping provision for children and youth in hostels and in Scouting and non-Scouting activity centres.

Many injuries arise with the use of bunk beds. Most of these occur when users fall from the beds when asleep, when using the access ladders, and from inappropriate use or horseplay. Bunk bed structures themselves have trapped users and resulted in suffocation or strangulation deaths.

This guidance is produced for those responsible for the maintenance of such sleeping accommodation, and for those leaders planning to use centres and sleeping accommodation featuring such units. It is based upon "The Bunk Beds (Entrapment Hazards) (Safety) Regulations 1987".

Bunk beds should ideally have :

- Double guardrails on all sides which are screwed, bolted or otherwise firmly attached to the bed structure.
- Spacing between the *bed frame* and bottom of the lower guard rail that is no typically, greater than 3.5 inches (89 mm).
- Upper guardrails that extend at least 5 inches (127 mm) above the *mattress surface* to prevent a user from rolling off.
- Cross ties under the mattress foundation are securely attached.
- A ladder that is secured to the bed frame and will not slip when a user climbs on it.
- A mattress that correctly fits the bed.
- Users are at least six years old !

Immediately before use :

- Strongly advise users to use the ladder and not chairs or other pieces of furniture to climb into or out of the top bunk.
- Confirm to users that rough play is unsafe, and such action will not be condoned.
- Think about night-time lighting, so that users will be able to see the ladders.

Due acknowledgement to

“Keeps Kids Healthy” – a UK guide to paediatric care

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