

A furniture tip-over injury is a situation where a person is toppled over by heavy furniture due to an interaction that displaced it from its normal position, such as climbing or exerting a force on it. When furniture topples, injuries can include being struck or crushed by the furniture which can result in serious injury such as asphyxiation, fractures, internal injuries and head injury.

Children under the age of five are at particular risk of injury due to their cognitive development and physical size. Children are often keen to explore the environment around them and may climb, reach or pull on furniture, increasing the risk of it toppling.

The following preventative measures can assist in reducing the risk of furniture tip-over injuries:

- Keep items like toys within the child's reach and avoid placing attractive items up high to reduce the risk of children climbing furniture.
- Ensure there are no hanging cords. A cord may be pulled by the child and topple the furniture.
- Teach children about the dangers of climbing furniture. Ensure children know that they are not allowed to climb furniture and be consistent.
- Inform adults who intermittently care for children in their home (such as grandparents) of the safety risks of toppling furniture.
- Active adult supervision. Know where your child is in the home and supervise them closely.

Current Legislation

While there are currently no mandatory safety standards in Australia in relation to furniture tip-overs, there are a range of voluntary measures and product recalls aiming to reduce safety risks.

In addition, in 2018, an amendment to WA's Residential Tenancies Act means landlords must allow tenants to attach furniture to a wall to prevent a child or person with a disability from being hurt.

A number of factors can impact furniture tip-over injuries including product design, anchoring furniture and consumer behaviour and awareness. Retailers, manufacturers, legislators and consumers all play an important role.

Retailers

- Should provide safety information around securing furniture in the home.
- Encourage buyers to purchase brackets or furniture straps if not provided with furniture products.
- Promote furniture that includes design elements to increase stability.

Consumers

- Choose stable furniture, that is low set with a wide base. Thin and top-heavy furniture can easily tip.
- Check that the unit is stable when drawers or cupboards are open and when applying pressure to the open drawer.

The most common pieces of household furniture prone to toppling include:

- Chest of Drawers
- Cabinets
- Cupboards & Wardrobes
- Televisions & Television Unit

Securing your furniture

Using the proper anchoring devices, such as furniture straps or brackets on household furniture items can significantly reduce the risk of furniture tip-over injuries.

- **Use furniture straps or brackets** to securely attach heavy furniture items to the wall throughout your home.
- **Use locks on cupboards and drawers.** An open chest of drawers acts like a pivot lever when a child uses them like a ladder for climbing.
- Place **heavier items** such as books at the bottom of storage furniture to reduce the risk of tip-overs.

Televisions

- **Secure your television** by either mounting it on the wall or use television straps to attach it to the wall or back of the entertainment unit.
- When mounting on the wall, ensure the wall is sturdy and use a wall mount designed for your television's size and weight.
- Invest in a television stand or entertainment unit that is specifically designed to support the weight and size of your television. This ensures a secure base and reduces the risk of tipping.
- **Position televisions** towards the back of the entertainment unit.
- **Keep all television cords tidy** and out of reach of children. Use cord organisers or cable covers to prevent entanglement and accidental tugging.

Kidsafe WA and the WA Consumer Product Advocacy Network advocate for and raise awareness of the risk associated with unsecured toppling furniture.

Kidsafe WA © 2026

Excerpts may be copied for educational purposes. Written permission is required to copy this fact sheet in its entirety.

For more information

www.kidsafewa.com.au
kidsafe@kidsafewa.com.au
(08) 6244 4880

