



## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 12, 2013

### THINK TWICE BEFORE OPENING YOUR WINDOWS

**SURREY** – As temperatures rise, so does the risk of young children falling out of open windows or from balconies.

In advance of the warmer weather, Fraser Health (FH) and the BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) are asking parents of young children to think twice before opening the window.

The public campaign aims to remind caregivers that safety latches should be properly installed on windows and that climbing hazards be removed from areas near windows and balconies. Fraser Health and BC Ambulance Service, with the support of [Partners Promoting Window and Balcony Safety](#), have issued a special decal to remind parents to do so.

These free decals will be made available in daycares and public health units across Fraser Health as of mid-June. The decals are also a reminder to parents and caregivers that window screens do not offer adequate protection. These screens are not strong enough to withstand the weight of a child pushing against them and should never be relied on as a safety measure.

At least 29 children were taken to hospital as a result of falling out of windows last year, and several already have been injured this spring.

#### Other safety tips to prevent falls from windows and balconies:

- Talk to children about window and balcony safety.
- Window screens are **not** strong enough to hold the weight of a child – they keep bugs out, not children in.
- Move furniture and planters away from windows and balcony edges to discourage children from climbing, especially cribs and beds.
- Install and maintain window safety devices - ensure there is a safe release option in case of a house fire.
- Keep windows open 10 centimetres or less – children can fit through a space as small as 12 centimetres.
- Don't leave children unattended on balconies or in higher floor rooms with open windows.

#### Quotes:

##### **Dr. Iain MacPhail, Program Medical Director (Trauma), Fraser Health:**

"It's hard enough to tell a parent that their child has suffered severe injuries that require extensive surgery and will likely result in long-term effects. This becomes especially heart-breaking when it is the result of an avoidable accident like falling through a window or from a balcony."

##### **Marilyn Oberg, Unit Chief, BC Ambulance Service:**

"Paramedics see the critical, and often preventable, injuries that result from falls from windows and balconies. The best advice we can provide is to ensure you have the right safety locks on windows and doors and use them – especially if you have young children."

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