

# Use bunk beds properly to minimize your risk of resident injuries

Falls can result from improper bunk bed use, causing residents to suffer fracture, bruise and cut injuries.

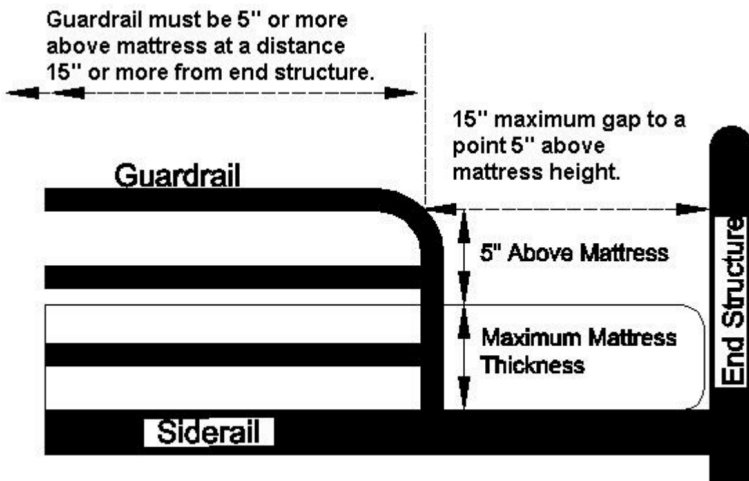


Adult residential facilities often need to use bunk beds in resident bedrooms with room size limitations and the desire to serve more clients. However, there are many challenges and concerns that must be addressed for this type of arrangement. Injuries from improper bunk bed use include cuts, bruises, and fractures. Strong consideration should be given to avoid or limit the use of bunk beds within your facility. If they cannot be avoided, attention and time should be given to three areas of focus: the room layout, the correct use/installation of the bed and the human factor specifics so that the resident remains safe while in your facility.

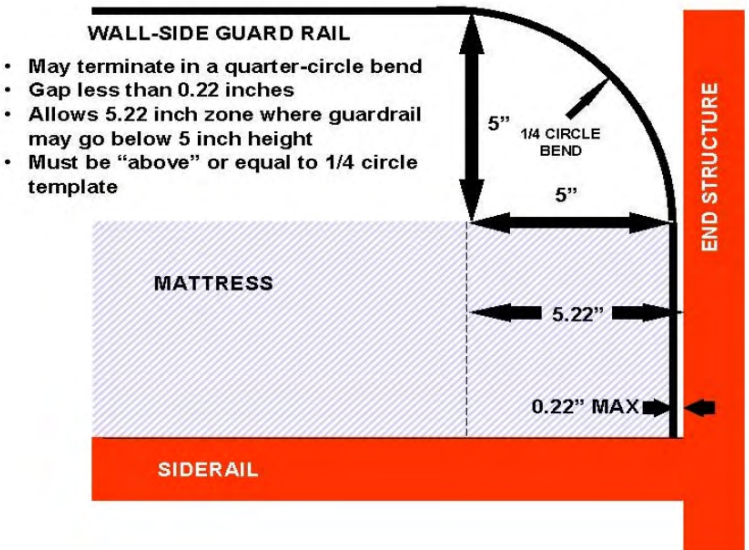
## Room

- Ensure there are nightlights in each sleeping room near the ladder area.
- Ensure a non-slip floor surface where the ladder is located.
- Remove obstacles from around the bottom of the bunk.
- Take down ceiling fans and other fixtures that come near the top bunk.
- Beds should not be placed adjacent to windows.

Graphics courtesy of U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)



### Continuous Guardrail



- May terminate in a quarter-circle bend
- Gap less than 0.22 inches
- Allows 5.22 inch zone where guardrail may go below 5 inch height
- Must be "above" or equal to 1/4 circle template

### Bed

- Beds should be carefully assembled according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Beds should be properly bolted to the wall according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- The bed weight ratings (total and for each bunk) should be displayed, acknowledged, and not exceeded.
- Follow the warning label information on the upper bunk bed structure and on the carton. Do not remove the warning label from the bed.
- Ensure the bunk bed carries a warranty and complies with all safety standards (ASTM, CPSC) for structural, proper guardrails, proper spacing on the bunk bed ends for entrapment prevention, proper mattress supports (side to side) and paint/finish safety.
- Ensure all railings are in place and a secure ladder, made of durable material with a sturdy base is provided.
- Do not use substitute parts. Contact the manufacturer or dealer for replacement parts.
- Metal bunkbeds will be more appropriate due to the bed bug problem with wooden bed frames.
- Only use the proper size mattress as recommended by the manufacturer.
- The mattress should be at least 5" below the top of the guardrails.
- Earthquake zones make bunkbeds more dangerous.

- Conduct regular inspections of the stability of beds, ladders, and railings to ensure they are in the proper position, free from damage and that all connectors are tight.

### Residents

- Consider age and physical/mental limitations when assigning a resident to a top bunk. Typically, the top bunk has a lower weight capacity than the lower bunk.
- The top bunk cannot be used/selected by resident if the bottom bunk is vacant.

- Ensure any type of drug or alcohol screening is conducted as needed (pre-admission and ongoing) before assigning to top bunk and if there are concerns, the resident should not use the top bunk.
- Residents should not wear socks when using ladder.
- Never attach or hang items to any part of the bunk that are not designed for use with the bed (for example: hooks, belts, jump ropes)
- Residents should not be allowed to remove the top rail and be instructed to not undermine the intent of the guardrail even for adults.

In the event bunk bed use cannot be avoided, focusing on the safety details of the room, the bed and the resident can help protect your clients from serious injuries and provide a safe environment for their care and recovery journey.

### **Additional Resources:**

- [CPSC Bunk Beds Business Guidance](#)
- [Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute, 16 CFR Part 1213 Safety Standard for Entrapment Hazards in Bunk Beds](#)
- Review the [Consumer Product Safety Commission ASTM F1427 Standard Consumer Safety Specification for Bunk Beds](#) for additional information and sign up for recall list email notices, as well as register products with the manufacturer.
- [16 CFR Part 1213 - Safety Standard for Entrapment Hazards in Bunk Beds](#)
- [ASTM International](#)

Providing solutions  
to help our members  
manage risk.®

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and safety needs, contact  
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