

Portable Cot Safety



Portable cots (also known as folding cots, travel cots or portacots) are very handy when you need to put your baby down to sleep whilst visiting friends, grandparents etc. for short periods. Because portable cots are foldable and transportable, they are subject to more wear and tear and are generally less robust than permanent sleeping enclosures such as household cots.

Injuries can be caused if the portable cot is not assembled correctly. Other injuries can be caused if the:

- portable cots collapses on the baby's head or limb, trapping them within or under the frame
- baby's hands or fingers get caught in gaps on the frame
- baby falls out of the cot (objects such as soft toys and pillows in the cot may allow the baby to climb)
- baby becomes trapped between the mattress and cot frame

A baby may suffocate if items such as toys, cot bumpers or pillows are placed in the cot.

Mandatory standard

Mandatory safety requirements for portable cots took effect in March 2009. The standard includes requirements for ensuring the folding mechanism is secure, that there are no gaps that could trap a child's head, that the mattress is safe and the cot has adequate warnings about safe use.

A 2010 version of the standard has been created, however it is yet to be made mandatory. The most important addition to the new standard is a test *that observes for adequate breathable zones*.

Kidsafe NSW recommends that you purchase a portable cot that meets the Australian Standard (AS/NZS 2195:2010).

Second-hand Portable Cots

If you use a second-hand portable cot it is essential to check that all parts are in good working order and it has full instructions for its safe assembly and use.

Online Purchasing

Be careful when buying online. Check that your purchases meet mandatory Australian safety standards and have not been recalled in Australia or another country. Consumer guarantees may be difficult to enforce if you purchase a product from an overseas supplier and you may not be able to obtain compensation if the goods cause an injury.

Portable cots are intended for temporary use and are not suitable for long term sleeping arrangements



Safety Features for Portable Cots

- Select a portable cot that meets the Australian Standard AS/NZS 2195:2010.
- The cot should have two locking mechanisms to prevent accidental collapse and closure.
- Look for possible entrapment areas where your baby could get a finger, limb or head stuck.
- If the cot has wheels or castors, make sure it also has brakes or some other mechanism to stop it rolling.
- The mattress should be firm and fit snugly into the base without gaps at the sides or ends.
- The floor of the portable cot should be firm with no sagging.
- The fabric and mesh sides should be taut and provide good ventilation.
- The cot should be easy to assemble and fold up and it shouldn't be too heavy to carry.



For more information visit:

- Product Safety Australia productsafety.gov.au
- Product Recalls Australia recalls.gov.au
- Choice choice.com.au
- Sids and Kids sidsandkids.org

Safe Practices

- Always follow the manufacturer's safety instructions for assembling and using the portable cot.
- Make sure the sides are fully clicked into place and the locking device is secure.
- Ensure children cannot unlock the locking devices.
- Check for tears in the mesh or fabrics. Repair any tears immediately.
- Regularly check the cot frame for cracks.
- Use the cot mattress provided with the portable cot. Always make sure the mattress and bedding fits snugly at the sides and the ends - a gap no more than your index finger.
- Do not put an additional mattress in the cot. Small children can become wedged between the mattresses and suffocate.
- Do not use pillows or bumpers. Children can become wedged in a pillow or bumper and suffocate.
- Discontinue using the cot before the child is able to release the locking devices possibly causing the portable cot to collapse.
- Do not use a portable cot if your child weighs more than the recommended weight advised by the manufacturer.
- Don't allow older children to climb in and out of the portable cot as this may cause strain to the framework.
- Ensure that no dangling cords from blinds, curtains or baby monitors or other possible entrapments are left near the portable cot.
- Inflatable constructions should not be used for a baby to sleep in.

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