BBSA
The Authority on UK Shading

PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS GUIDE

VERTICAL BLINDS

This document has been produced by the British Blind and Shutter Association (BBSA) to highlight the key characteristics of vertical blinds to help you make an informed choice when buying your blinds. The characteristics detailed below represent the state of the art and any relevant standard.

Dimensions

The number of slats/louvres is determined by the width of the blind. For this reason, some blinds in adjacent windows which may seem to be of equal size may have a different number of slats due to slight dimensional differences between window sizes.

When the louvres are fully retracted, they will stack to one or both sides. The wider the blind, the bigger the stack. The number of louvres used to make a vertical blind is calculated and rounded up; this may result in blinds of similar sizes having a noticeably different overlap in the louvres.

Operational clearances

For a vertical blind to operate correctly, the louvres must have clearance from the window sill or floor. This allows the louvres to traverse correctly, and to rotate from the open to the closed position.

The typical clearance gap is expected to be between 5mm to 15mm. This gap is measured at the shortest point of the window, so if the sill or floor is not parallel to the blind's fixing point the gap could be greater.

Fabrics

Fabrics made from cotton or which have a high cotton content can take on moisture and shrink. For this reason, these fabrics are not suitable for high moisture environments. Slight cupping (curving) of the fabric may occur; this is typically due to changes in humidity levels.

If the back of the fabric is different to the front of the fabric, when the fabric is folded to create the pocket at the top and bottom of the louvre, this will show the opposite side of the fabric.

If the fabric is translucent, there will be darker areas where the louvres overlap.

Where fabrics are stitched, there will be pin-holes in the fabric. These will allow light to pass and will be more obvious on darker/opaque/blackout fabrics.

Louvre/slat closure

When the louvres are fully closed, there will always be a slight gap between the slats due to the header at the top of the louvre and the weight at the base.

Dim-out

Vertical blinds with opaque fabrics provide a good degree of dim-out but there will be light coming around the extremities of the blind and where the slats close. This is more apparent with blinds fitted inside a reveal than those fitted outside.

Due to their product design characteristics, vertical blinds do not offer blackout.

Fitting in a bay window

When fitted in a bay window, there will be some gaps where the neighbouring blind headrails meet each other. The size of any gap will depend on several factors including; the shape of the bay, the style of the window and the specification of the blind system.

Similarly, at the edge of the bay there may be light gaps/ potential loss of privacy depending on the angle of the bay and the adjoining walls. On some bay windows it is possible to have a track bent to the shape of the windows, eliminating the gaps explained above.

Fitting inside the reveal (window recess)

To allow for operating clearance, the width of the blind must be narrower than the width of the reveal. If there are any obstructions in the reveal, for example tiles at the base or a dado rail, the blind will need to be made to accommodate the narrowest width.

Reveal (recess) not dimensionally consistent

A vertical blind is made square but reveals often aren't. The head of the window and/or sill may not be level and the distances between the side walls of the reveal often vary.

The distance from the edge of the reveal to the window may also vary, so blinds will either be fitted to run parallel to the window or to the edge of the reveal.

Always ensure you read and carefully follow the operating and maintenance instructions.

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Motorisation

There is a wide range of motorised solutions available for your comfort and convenience and each system will have its own characteristics. Some points to consider are:

- **Speed and alignment:** Blinds in the same installation may not travel at the same speed and may not line up if stopped during the travel of the blinds due to mechanical and electrical tolerances.
- **Noise:** Some noise will be emitted from the motor operating the blind particularly on 240v powered blinds. Quiet motors may be available.
- **Wiring:** Some surface wiring may be required. Where 240V mains power is involved, a competent person, who can certify the works, will be required to provide a power feed unless the blinds can be powered from a plug inserted into an existing socket.
- **Motor protection:** For safety reasons, most motors are fitted with a thermal cut-out to protect them from getting too hot (usually from over-use). When cooled sufficiently, the motor will start working again.

Smart Home Hub

Where a smart home hub is used the signals to the blinds may occasionally be interrupted by other wireless devices in the home such as smart speakers or doorbells. This can affect the operation, or seamless operation of the blind.

Child safety

Blinds with cords or chains could pose a risk of strangulation to young children. The BBSA recommends inherently safe products (safe by design). If you choose a product with additional child safety devices these must be securely fitted as advised.

For further information on window blind safety visit **www.makeitsafe.org.uk**.

make it safe™

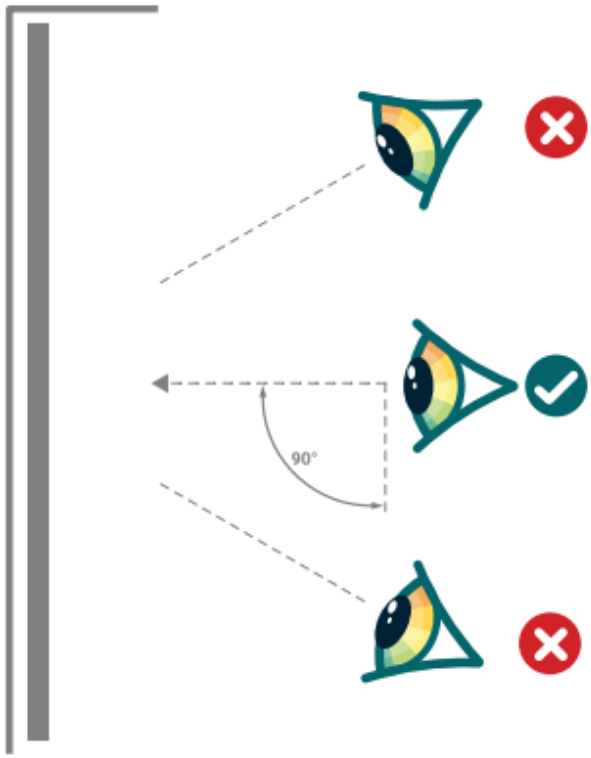
Visual product inspection

When checking the overall visual characteristics and aesthetics, the following should be observed:

Viewing distance and lighting
3m for exterior products in diffuse daylight;
2m for interior products with lighting suitable for normal room use.

Viewing angle
Perpendicular to the surface being checked.

Viewing aids
Naked eye (and any corrective glasses if applicable).



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