

For a safer home Consider fire-resistant materials

If you are in the market for a new home, you may be concerned about fire prevention and fire-resistant materials.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that there were 55,200 fires reported in Canada in 1999. Ontario's Office of the Fire Marshall reported 30,863 fires in Ontario alone in 2001, with property losses totaling more than \$348 million. The number one culprit in fires was found to be cooking, while the number one cause of fire deaths was reported as careless smoking.

Along with proper smoke detectors and automatic fire sprinkler systems that greatly contribute to surviving a home fire, there are building materials and methods that are more fire resistant.

According to home expert and TV and radio personality Shell Busey, homeowners can build safer homes using Insulated Concrete Forms (ICFs). ICFs are used to create thick concrete walls with insulation and other construction layers built in. One of the safest ICF systems is called the Arxx High Performance Wallsystem. "Arxx is an insulated, steel-reinforced concrete wall system that has been tested by United Laboratories and has a fire resistance rating of 2 - 4 hours," said Busey. That compares to average of only 20 minutes for a 2X6 constructed wood-framed home. At this time, Arxx is the only ICF entitled to bear the ULC fire resistance logo, which is a

key indicator of tested fire protection products and materials.

Time is of the essence in a fire and the longer the fire resistance rating, the longer the homeowner has to escape with loved ones and contact the fire department to try to save the structure. With Arxx walls, the homeowners have at least four times longer to take action.

According to Busey, another step toward fire-resistance is the roof, where fires can spread from wind-blown burning embers. Fire-resistant roofing materials include fiberglass reinforced shingles, slate, terra cotta or other types of tile, or standing-seam metal roofing. Your builder or roofing contractor can advise you on the various fire-resistant roofing materials. Remember, slate and tile can be much heavier than asphalt or wood shingles. Your roofing contractor should determine whether your roof is strong enough to support them. If you live in a heavy snowfall area, you may consider standing-seam metal roof that sheds snow efficiently.

For more information about fire protection tips, visit the NFPA website at www.nfpa.org. For UL fire resistance rating information, visit www.ul.com. And, to learn more about the Arxx High Performance Wallsystem, visit their website at www.arxxbuild.com or call 1-800-293-3210.

—News Canada

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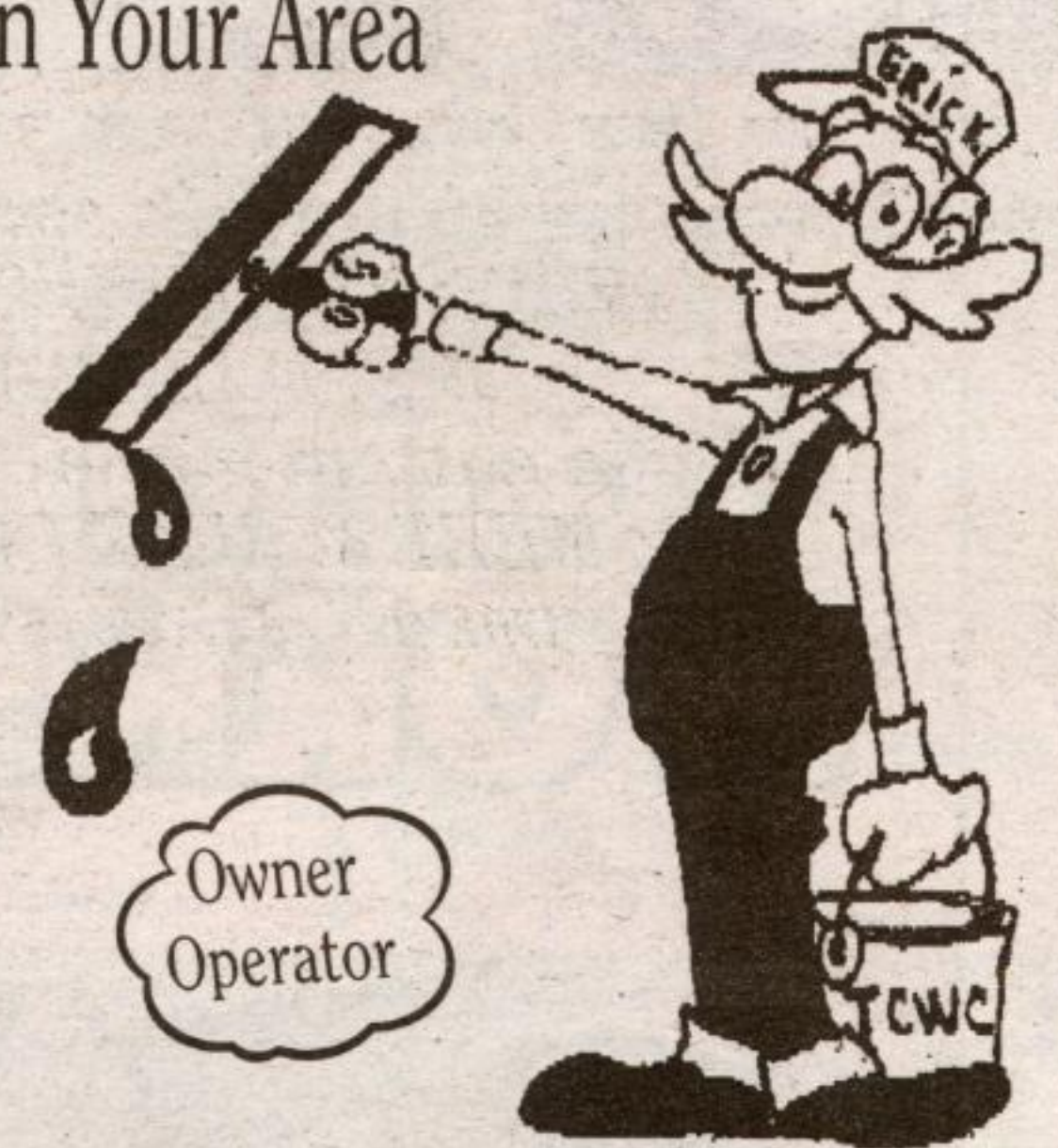
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