

Proofing your home against the vagaries of nature

Here are some measures suggested by Emergency Preparedness Canada to help you reduce hazards to family and home.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE

—Trim tree branches around your house. In high winds they can interfere with electrical power lines or fall and damage roofs.
—Maintain eavestroughs to ensure a fast and smooth runoff of water from your home. Keep them clear of leaves and debris and make sure they are large enough to handle the job. Extend rainwater drainpipes away from the foundation, ensure the ground slopes away from the walls of the building and, if you are in a storm area, invest in a sump pump.

—Check basements during and following a storm. Some home insurances will only cover storm sewer back-up but not flooding or leaking.

—Make sure everyone in the family knows how to turn off electricity at the main switch and gas and water at the main valves.

—Have battery-operated flashlights and radio at hand, and a good supply of fresh batteries.

POWER FAILURES IN WINTER

—Install a standby stove or heater that does not require electricity; if necessary make sure it is properly vented. If standby heating unit uses the normal house oil or gas supply, play it safe and have it connected with shut-off valves by a reliable service person from the fuel suppliers.

—If you have standby heating, turn it on before the house gets

too cold. If the unit must be vented to the same chimney flue as the furnace, switch the furnace off before disconnecting the furnace flue.

—Keep all doors and windows closed; the house will hold its heat for hours.

—Check to see that no part of the plumbing system can freeze.

—If the house has been vacated: Turn off the main electricity switch.

Turn off the water main where it enters the house and protect the valve, inlet pipe, meter and pump with blankets or insulation material.

Open all water taps including the drain on the water heater; flush toilets several times.

Check operating manual for dishwasher, washing machine etc., for draining or frost protection instructions.

ELECTRICAL STORMS

—Install lightning rods, especially if your home is on a hill top or surrounding trees are the same height or lower.

—During a lightning storm keep clear of windows, doors, fireplaces, radiators, stoves, metal pipes, sinks or other conductors. Disconnect electrical appliances such as radios and televisions. Don't handle electrical equipment or telephones.

FLOODS

At threat of a flood shut off electrical power, but don't try to do it if the main switch is in a place already flooded. If conditions are wet around a switch box, stand on a dry board and use a dry stick to turn off the switch.

Carpet cleaning is important

Your carpeting is a major investment that deserves to be protected to prolong its life and its appearance.

Dirt from outside is tracked onto carpeting everytime someone enters your home. This dirt not only settles on the carpet, but works its way down to the carpet base.

Walking on the carpet causes the dirt to act like sandpaper, sawing away at the fibres and causing permanent damage. Cleaning at regular intervals prolongs the life and appearance of your carpet.

Vacuuming is the first line of defense. Heavy traffic areas, such as entrances and hallways frequently, should be vacuumed sometimes daily. Overall household carpeting should be vacuumed at least weekly.

WHEN TO CLEAN CARPETS

Frequent vacuuming cannot remove all dirt, dust and stains. This requires specialized equipment. How frequently your carpets require a thorough cleaning depends on the use they receive.

A good rule of thumb is: i) thoroughly clean high traffic areas with specialized cleaning equipment once every four to six months, ii) all your carpeting once every six to twelve months.

Time your major cleanings with this in mind: IN WINTER: salt and sand are major carpet destroyers. IN SUMMER: dirt and soil.

WAYS TO CLEAN CARPETS

Aerosol rug cleaners do work, but superficially, especially if you don't scrub them in. The optical brighteners they contain give car-

pets a temporary clean look but resoiling is a major problem. Residue remains on the carpet to attract dirt. This accelerates resoiling. Often, an aerosol rug cleaner covers only a small portion of your rug, making the inconvenience and expense of another purchase a losing proposition.

Professional Cleaning: good, but expensive, especially if they are cleaning a large area or an area larger than their advertised specials.

To avoid unpleasantly large bills, obtain a written estimate on the amount and type of carpeting you have. Check with the Better Business Bureau, Carpet Cleaning Institute, neighbors or friends on the reliability and credentials of the firm you are considering.

HOW TO REMOVE CARPET STAINS

Time is of the essence in removing stains before they set. Treat them immediately. The

longer they remain in the carpet, the more difficult it will be to remove them. Some stains respond slowly to treatment and not all stains can be removed due to the length of time the stain has been in the carpet, stain composition, fibers, etc.

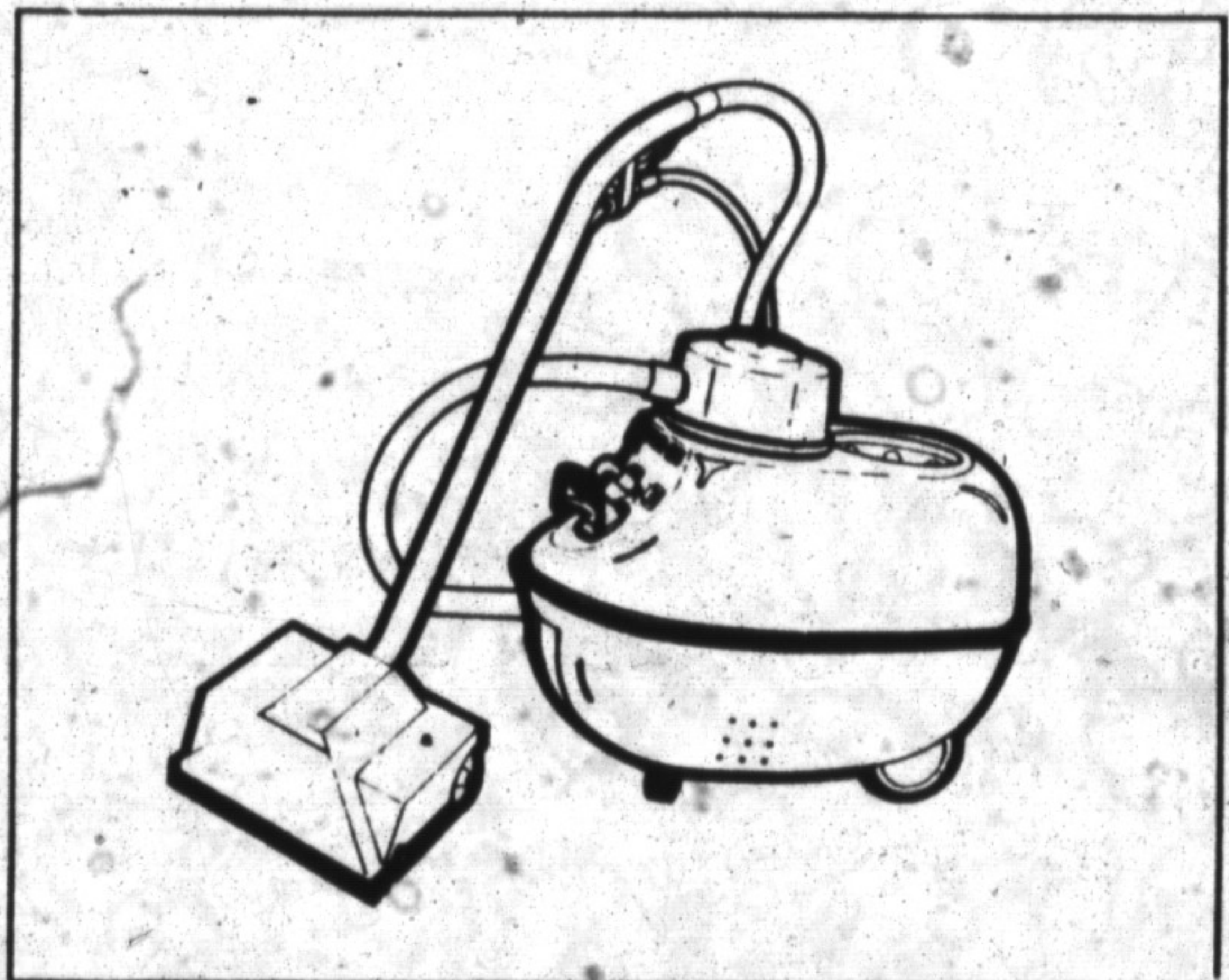
1) Always pre-test cleaning solutions in an inconspicuous area of carpet before making general application in a more visible area. If there is no color transfer, proceed to use the solution. However, should there be color transfer, proceed at your own discretion.

2) Do not overwet stained area. Use small amounts of cleaning solution, blot frequently.

3) Do not rub or brush. Blot from outer edge of stain inward to prevent rings.

4) Always rinse gently with water as final step, then absorb remaining moisture with towels.

5) Wait until area is dry, then brush up carpet pile.



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