

Home Improvement

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 rain-

water 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.

EARTHQUAKES

—Bolt down or provide other strong supports for gas heaters and gas appliances because fires can result from broken gas lines and appliance connections. Use flexible connections wherever possible.

—Place large and heavy objects on lower shelves of cupboard and shelving.

—For protection at home during a quake take cover under a heavy desk, table or bed; stand in an inside doorway away from windows.



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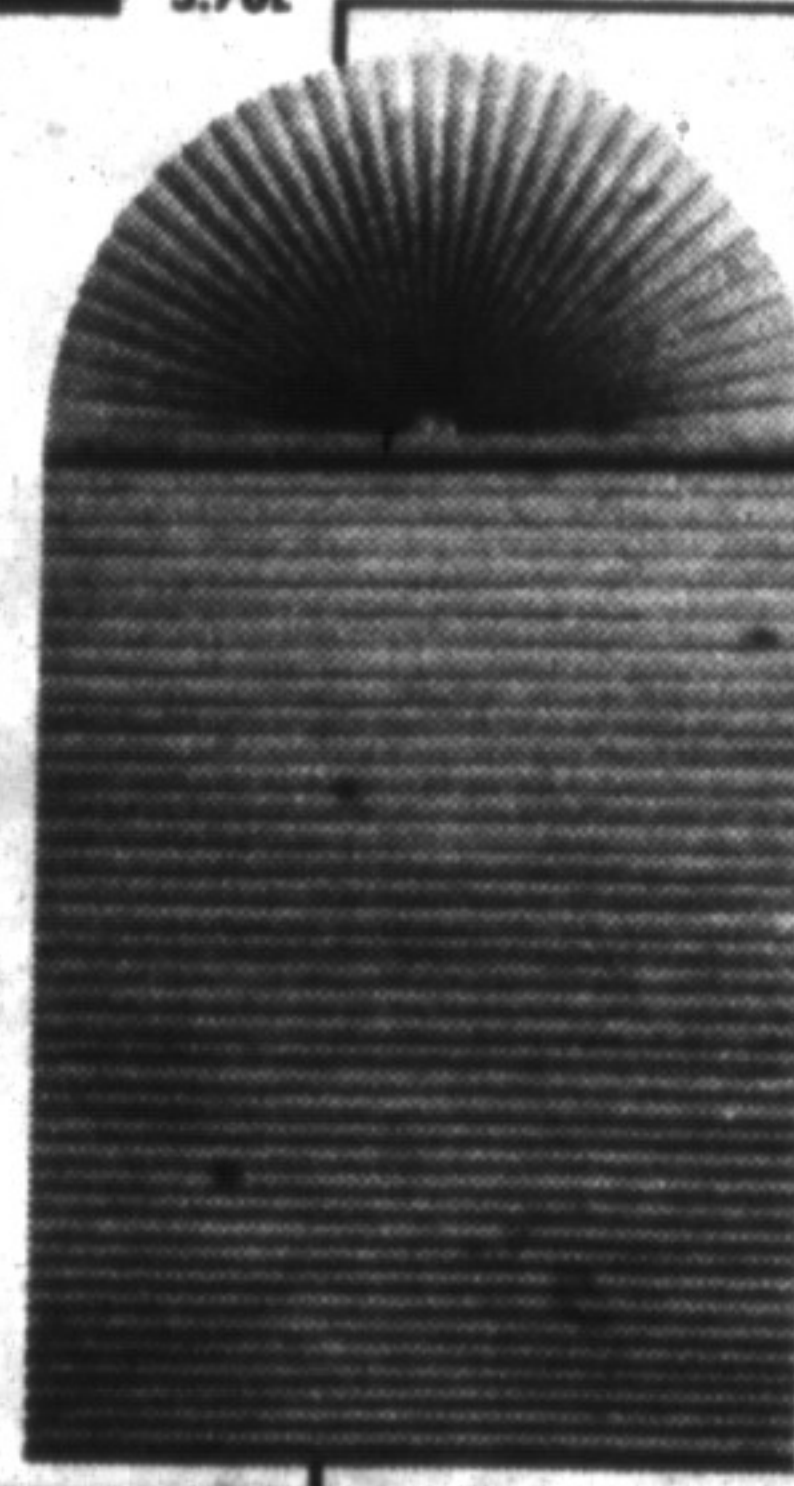
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