

Home and Garden '86

Precautions needed in stopping home thefts

By NANCY HOSKIN
As with all other North American cities, small and large, Markham's crime rate is on the rise.

Frightening statistics from police officials and Statistics Canada show that one in eight homes will be broken into in this area each year with residential burglaries between 1983 and 1984 up 20 per cent.

The typical burglar is between the ages of 12 and 22, with minimal education, is unemployed, strikes in his own community and usually has a habit to support which can be as simple as playing video games.

Most goods are taken and sold for 5 per cent of their value with televisions, ghetto blasters and VCR's topping the list of favorites.

The majority of break-ins occur during the day, with over 52 per cent happening between noon and 6 p.m.

With both spouses working outside the home, residential crime is increasing, because most neighborhoods are remaining empty during critical hours of the day.

According to Glenn Crosby, President of First Response Home Protection Systems Inc., over 35 per cent of residential break-ins in Markham are not reported. Either the property owner wasn't insured to cover the loss, items were taken that shouldn't have been in the home or the family is not interested in prolonging the ordeal any further, for example if an assault was involved.

Most break-ins happen through basement windows or through sliding glass patio doors.

A number of simple safety measures can help to reduce the chance

of break-ins:

- Don't plant shrubs directly blocking the front door. Small shrubs grow into larger ones and allow the perfect coverage for thieves to get into a home without being seen from the street.

- Always keep your garage locked. On many occasions the York Regional Police have reported burglars using tools, found in the garage, to gain entry into a home.

- Have your house numbers large and well-lit so emergency vehicles can see clearly which house they have been called to.

- Photoelectric cells, which can be found at any Canadian Tire store and range from \$8 - \$10, are a great way to keep house numbers lit. They automatically turn on at sunset and off at sunrise," said Mr. Crosby.

- Leave timers on when you're away or even when you use only a section of a house. Make sure they go on and turn off following a normal pattern.

- Set timers to come on in sequence placing them in the living room, the family room and an upstairs front bedroom, for example. Have them follow that order when going off."

- Insert metal screws into the top tracks of sliding glass doors. Leave screws extended so that the door can close but cannot be opened from the outside. You can also place a piece of wood inside the door-track to prevent the door being forced open by an intruder.

- Another way of securing a home from intruders is the installation of a burglar alarm. Only two per cent of all Canadian homes have sys-

tems, usually because of two unsolicited worries; the cost and the possible false alarms.

Alarm systems usually range in price from \$1,600 to \$2,000, depending upon the type, which initially may seem like a lot of money to pay, but may save thousands of dollars in the long run if someone attempts to break into your home.

"There are only three reasons for false alarms, poor equipment, poor installation and poor customer use," said Mr. Crosby.

There are two types of alarms; the hardwired, traditional approach where different detectors are connected by wires taped on the outside of windows and entrances.

Then there is the wireless alarm, which recently joined the Canadian market in 1981. The wireless is radio operated to a main control. There are a number of passive infrared detectors covering both the perimeter of the house as well as the interior. This particular concept was developed during the Viet Nam War. The infrared detectors absorb moving body heat.

"Every home has a main traffic pattern. Burglars usually hit the master bedroom for money and jewelry, the family room for the TV and VCR and the dining room for silver, china and crystal. Detectors can be put where needed depending on the home, and are not limited by wiring," Mr. Crosby explained.

Another advantage to the wireless alarm is that it can be taken with you when you move, the system is completely portable; the detectors, key pad and panic button.



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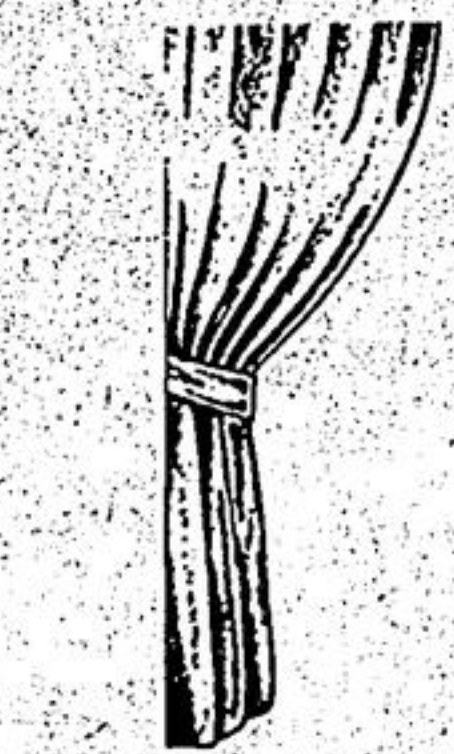
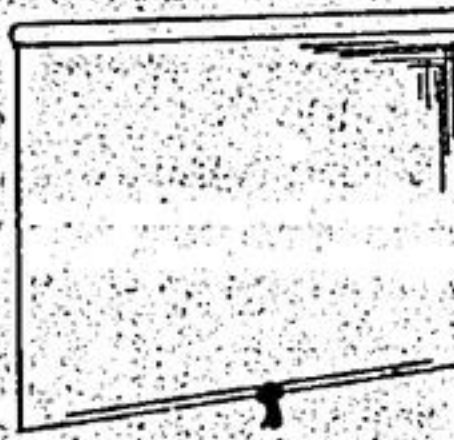
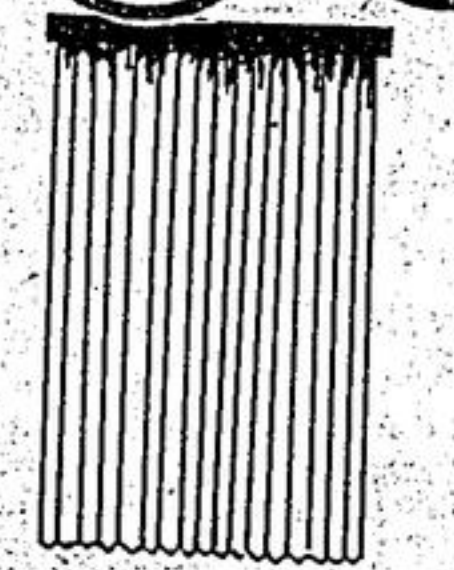
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