

Smoke detectors can save lives

In the winter time, when people think of fire safety they think of fireplaces. But fires occur in other parts of the house too — in the living room due to a frayed electrical cord, in the kitchen from grease igniting, or in the bedroom because a cigarette or candles were still burning when you fell asleep.

Fire experts agree that prevention is the key to fire safety, says the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association (GTHBA).

By spotting home fire hazards and taking a few simple precautions, many fires and fire-related injuries can be prevented. Survival depends on developing an early warning system and having a family escape plan.

Since the mid 1970s, all new homes built in Ontario have been equipped with smoke detectors. If your home was built prior to this, you should make certain you install smoke detectors on every floor and outside bedroom doors. Many fires occur at night when families are asleep. Fire officials assert that the small investment of installing a smoke detector can improve a family's chances of surviving a fire by over 50 per cent.

Be sure to follow the manufacturers' instructions for proper installation and maintenance of the smoke detectors. This usually includes testing it, replacing worn out batteries and bulbs promptly, and cleaning the grill to prevent airflow blockage. Smoke detectors can save lives, but only if properly installed and maintained.

Next, plan your family's escape route. Panic is the major cause of fire deaths. Planning ahead, rehearsing, thinking, and acting clearly are keys to surviving a fire.

Each bedroom should have two ways out. If bedrooms are on the second floor, consider installing an escape ladder that can be let down when needed. Have one spot outside the house designated for everyone to meet, away from the house, to make sure everyone escapes safely.

Remember that smoke and poisonous gases rise with the hot air from the flames. Instruct family

members to crawl along the floor where smoke and fumes are the lightest.

Members of the GTHBA want your family to be safe and enjoy your new home. Educating families to safely

escape from a home fire is, to use a familiar phrase, the ounce of prevention that's worth a pound of cure. Help keep your family safe by installing smoke detectors, planning escape routes and a meeting place.



Fireplaces are not the only sources of possible fire hazards in a home. Make sure each level is equipped with a smoke alarm.

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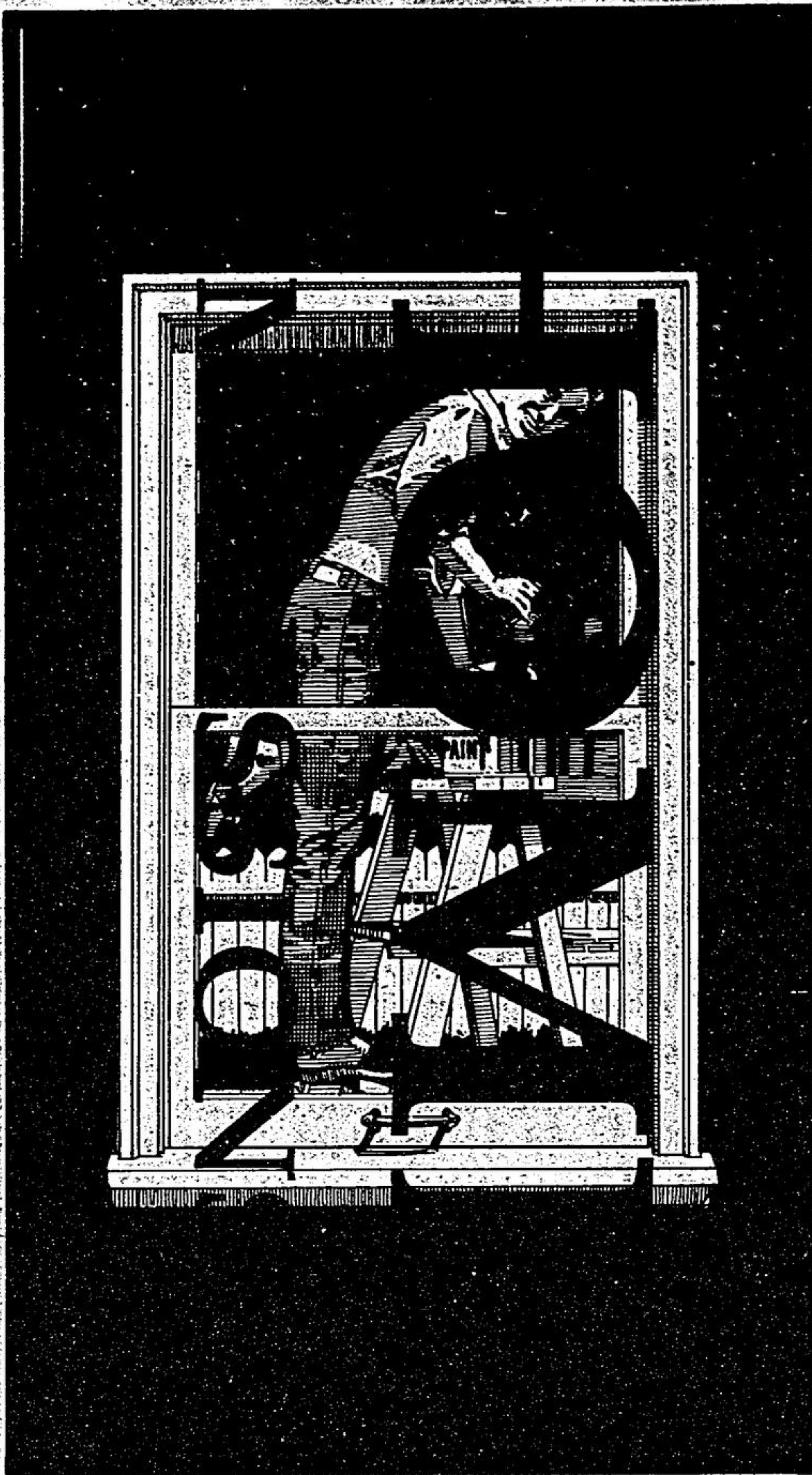
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