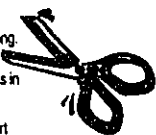


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APPLIANCE DOCTOR

What should be done to create safer homes



JOE GAGNON

This article is written to inform the consumer and to warn the construction industry, that if this advocate turns his attention in your direction, some of you will pay through the nose. Get your attention — I hope so.

I know of a community where several new homes were built this past year and the dryer has to be vented into and up the walls and across the attic etc. The length is much too long and consumers are forced to use that dreaded plastic vent line. This was all created by the builder without any thought to the homeowners safety or to the state construction codes which specify that the vent line should be no longer than 14 feet and should be metal. I would hope that the construction industry would wise up to how many house fires are started each year by an improperly vented clothes dryer.

If I was having a new home built or an older home renovated, I would incorporate into the job some things which differ from the norm. I thought the readers of this column might find it interesting as to what my thoughts are on this subject.

1. Let's start with the dryer. I would have a direct hole made on the wall behind the dryer. It would be in the exact position where the exhaust comes out of the dryer so that a short piece of solid aluminum vent line would fit perfectly in place. The venting to the outside would be a distance of only inches and this method would add years off life to the product plus assure that little lint would ever clog up the vent line. Not only would it be the safest method, and add years to the product, it would also take about one half as long to dry a load of clothes and save a lot of money in energy cost.

2. If I was having a new kitchen floor installed I would make sure that the sub-board was removable in front of my dishwasher. I can't tell you how many times people purchase a new dishwasher and when they try to re-

move the old one, it won't come out. There are leveling legs on a dishwasher and they only go up so far. If they don't clear the new floor it many times means removing the kitchen counter top. That can end up costing more than the dishwasher.

3. I would have a circuit breaker box installed in my stairway leading into the basement. Every year in this country homeowners are killed when they step into a flooded basement. I would make it easy to kill all power to the home at a point which would be safe to do so. I would also place a smoke alarm at that point.

4. The plumbing pipes to my clothes washer would have the new type shut-offs called handles. They would not be the round type shut offs that we normally see in homes. The reason for these new type handles makes it as easy as using your fingers to shut off the water supply when you are done washing. There is a lot of damage caused by ruptured hoses leading to a clothes washer and it will only happen once to you before you give this some serious thought.

5. I would make sure that all gas lines have a shut off valve installed where I can reach it easily in case of emergency.

6. In the built in area of my refrigerator on the back wall, I would have louvers cut into the wall and even a small fan installed to remove the heat which is displaced by the refrigerator compressor. This removal of heat is critical to the life expectancy of the refrigerator and also to the cost of operation to any refrigerator.

7. The stove or microwave would be placed far enough away from the refrigerator so that the refrigerator didn't suffer the added heat of cooking products.

Just some thoughts folks as to what I would do, and maybe something for the construction industry to think about.

Joe Gagnon, the Appliance Doctor, will answer your questions about maintaining and repairing large appliances. Gagnon is president of Carmack Appliances in Garden City and does a weekly radio program on WJR-AM. He is author of "First Aid from the Appliance Doctor," available at area bookstores.

Levy

from page 2D

rods. They can be suspended on cloth tabs, or brass pinch-on tabs. The fabric for said curtains should be a lined (necessary for room darkening) cotton with a whimsical trim.

The curtain fabrics offer many options. Plain colors (even plain old beige linen) are great for trims. We haven't discussed provincial printed fabrics, generally small all-over repeats. They are the essence of French. Flat, wide, ribbon-like braids sewn on at least 1/4-inch from the edges are quaint. The trim could also be hanging hand-tied tassels in agreeable colors; the more handsome the tassel the more costly it becomes.

On the table

Ready to select tables and lamps? In many previous columns I have discussed scale. Once again, be sure that the accompanying tables aren't too ponderous; the old ones are mostly small. The lamps are also lightweight.

French lamps simply follow their own predecessors. The "bouillotte" is the most recognized, always bespeaking French. The best interpretation will be painted tole, usually a two- or three-candled version. There were no coffee tables in 18th century France, but there were charismatic painted tole trays, often set on a low table and used in front of a settee.