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Laurier raises awareness of kitchen fires for Fire Prevention Week

WATERLOO – Laurier’s Safety, Health, Environment and Risk Management (SHERM) department is partnering with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to remind community members about the dangers of kitchen fires during Fire Prevention Week Oct. 6-12. The fire safety campaign will include spreading the word about the causes of kitchen fires, most of which result from unattended cooking, and teaching the Laurier community how to prevent kitchen fires from starting in the first place through events Oct. 8 and 11 on Laurier’s Brantford and Waterloo campuses.

“Kitchen fires often occur due to someone leaving the kitchen for only a few minutes,” said Philip Teskey, Laurier’s fire safety officer. “Sadly, that’s all it takes for a dangerous fire to start. We hope that Fire Prevention Week will help us reach students, staff, faculty and community members before they suffer a damaging lesson.”

According to the latest NFPA research, cooking is the leading cause of home fires. Two of every five home fires begin in the kitchen — more than any other place in the home. Cooking fires are also the leading cause of home fire-related injuries.

Among the safety tips that SHERM recommends are:

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, broiling or boiling food.
- If you must leave the room, even for a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- When you are simmering, baking or roasting food, check it regularly, stay in the home and use a timer.
- If you have young children, use the stove’s back burners whenever possible. Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the stove.
- When you cook, wear clothing with tight-fitting sleeves.
- Keep potholders, oven mitts, dishtowels, and anything else that can burn, away from your stovetop.
- Clean up food and grease from burners and stovetops.

Fire Prevention Week is supported by fire departments across the country and is the longest-running public health and safety observance on record. This year, Laurier will participate by holding Campus and Community Partners Fire Prevention Fairs on its Waterloo and Brantford campuses. In Brantford, the fair will be held Oct. 8 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Research and Academic Centre West front lobby, and will include a presentation by the Brantford Fire Department in the Wilkes Rec Centre Gym starting at 12:15 p.m. On the Waterloo campus, events take place Oct. 11 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Concourse, including a presentation by Pioneering Technology “Safe T Elements” starting at 12:15 p.m.

For more information about SHERM, or Laurier’s Fire Prevention Week activities, contact Philip Teskey at 519-884-0710 ext. 3887 or pteskey@wlu.ca, or visit www.wlu.ca/sherm.