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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Fire Prevention Week “Prevent Home Fires” October 5- 11, 2008**

A pot holder too close to a lit burner or a space heater left on overnight could be all it takes to start a home fire. In fact, cooking and heating are among the leading causes of home fires in the United States, according to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

That’s why Waterloo Fire Rescue is teaming up with NFPA from October 5-11 to urge Black Hawk County residents to “Prevent Home Fires” during Fire Prevention Week. This year’s campaign focuses on preventing all the leading causes of home fires – cooking, heating and electrical equipment, and smoking materials. Additionally, fire safety educators will be teaching local residents how to plan and practice escape from a home in case a fire occurs.

According the latest research from NFPA, more than 2,500 people died in home fires in the United States in 2006, and 12,500 were injured. Fire departments responded to 396,000 home fires, which accounted for 80% of civilian deaths and 76% of injuries that year.

“While the number of home fires is daunting, the good news is that many are easily preventable when residents take simple steps to increase their safety from fire,” said Waterloo Fire Rescue Fire Chief Doug Carter. “Whether it’s smoking outside the home, keeping space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn, or staying in the kitchen when you are using the stovetop, there are easy things you can do to keep your home and family safe from fire.”

Do you know how to keep your home safe from fire hazards? Reviewing the following information and taking action can help you “Prevent Home Fires” during Fire Prevention Week and year-round.

- **Cooking:** Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period time, turn off the stove.
- **Heating:** Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- **Electrical:** Replace cracked and damaged electrical cords; use extension cords for temporary wiring only. Consider having additional circuits or receptacles added by a qualified electrician.
- **Smoking:** If you smoke, smoke outside; wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays.

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Fire Prevention Week is actively supported by fire departments across the country. For 85 years fire departments have observed Fire Prevention Week, making it the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

Waterloo Fire Rescue will be making engine visits to area schools throughout the month of October. Topics that our fire department staff will be discussing with the children are: firefighters are our friends, crawl low under smoke, and get out and stay out. The children will be given the opportunity to learn about and observe the fire truck first hand and will receive fire prevention handouts.

Waterloo Fire Rescue anticipates hundreds of school age children will tour the fire station and firefighters will be taking part in several community safety events throughout the month. Annually, Waterloo Fire Rescue provides community safety education for thousands of area children and adults in Black Hawk County.

***For more information regarding Fire Prevention Week and for lesson plans for teachers—visit [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org).***

***For interactive games and life safety information visit our website at [www.firepals.com](http://www.firepals.com)***

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