

## Stove Guard real life-saver: Fire marshal

By Wayne Thibodeau  
The Guardian

A new device that automatically shuts off a kitchen stove if somebody leaves the room will save hundreds of lives, P.E.I.'s fire marshal says.

Dave Blacquiere said he's ecstatic about a new product, called a Stove Guard, which is made and sold by a small Saskatchewan company.

The Stove Guard is basically an automatic timer with a motion detector. As soon as somebody leaves the kitchen an internal timer starts running.

Power to the stove is shut off after a pre-programmed countdown expires. As soon as somebody returns to the kitchen, the timer resets itself and the cooking resumes.

Blacquiere said kitchen fires are the most common cause of house fires in Prince Edward Island.

An estimated 47,000 residential fires a year start on stove tops across North America. More than 24,000 people are injured, about 80 will die. Property damage will top \$135 million.

"I remember a couple who had been out socializing and came home and started to cook onion rings on the stove," said Blacquiere. "The socializing continued. The onion rings caught on fire and filled the house with smoke. A minor mistake cost that couple their lives."

But Blacquiere said that fire and many others would have been prevented if a Stove Guard had been installed.

But that protection comes with a price. It costs about \$339 Canadian and can be purchased online or locally at MacArthur's Appliances in Charlottetown.

Don Uhrich is the president of Stove Guard International. He said Stove Guard was originally designed to help Alzheimer sufferers and others easily distracted who wanted to enjoy the benefits of independent living, while remaining in their own homes.

"Unattended cooking is responsible for so much property damage and personal injuries to these people," Uhrich said in a personal note published on his website. "When Stove Guard is installed in the kitchen of their residence they and their family will have the peace of mind knowing that such a safety device is present."

The device is easy to install.

The power control box is connected between the stove plug and the existing wall outlet. No electrician is needed. A small sensor with an adjustable timer is then put in an upper cabinet or on the wall.

Consumer Reports tested the product and it "worked as advertised." Blacquiere said he's tried the device, too, and he's impressed.

"We've preached the message that smoke detectors save lives and they do," said Blacquiere. "But these devices stop the problem before it starts."

