

Halloween Safety

Halloween is a cherished tradition but the excitement of the night can cause children to forget to be careful. There is no real “trick” to making Halloween a real treat for the entire family. The major dangers are not from witches or spirits but rather from falls and pedestrian/car crashes. Many communities officially designate a “Beggars’ Night” and assign specific hours for trick-or-treat activities.

Both children and adults need to think about safety on this annual day of make-believe.



The National Safety Council urges motorists to be especially alert on Halloween.

Motorists

- Watch for children darting out from between parked cars.
- Watch for children walking on roadways, medians and curbs.
- Enter and exit driveways and alleys carefully.
- At twilight and later in the evening, watch for children in dark clothing.

Before children start out on their “trick or treat” rounds, parents should:

Parents

- Make sure that an adult or an older responsible youth will be supervising the outing for children under age 12.
- Plan and discuss the route trick-or-treaters intend to follow. Know the names of older children’s companions.
- Instruct your children to travel only in familiar areas and along an established route.
- Teach your children to stop only at houses or apartment buildings that are well-lit and never to enter a stranger’s home.
- Establish a return time.
- Tell your youngsters not to eat any treat until they return home.
- Review all appropriate trick-or-treat safety precautions, including pedestrian/traffic safety rules.
- Pin a slip of paper with the child’s name, address and phone number inside a pocket in case the youngster gets separated from the group.

Costume Design

- Only fire-retardant materials should be used for costumes.
- Costumes should be loose so warm clothes can be worn underneath.
- Costumes should not be so long that they are a tripping hazard. (Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries on Halloween.)
- If children are allowed out after dark, outfits should be made with light colored materials.
- Strips of retroreflective tape should be used to make children visible.

Face Design

- Masks can obstruct a child's vision. Use facial make-up instead.
- When buying special Halloween makeup, check for packages containing ingredients that are labeled "Made with U.S. Approved Color Additives," "Laboratory Tested," "Meets Federal Standards for Cosmetics," or "Non-Toxic." Follow manufacturer's instruction for application.
- If masks are worn, they should have nose and mouth openings and large eye holes.

Accessories

- Knives, swords and other accessories should be made from cardboard or flexible materials.
- Do not allow children to carry sharp objects.
- Bags or sacks carried by youngsters should be light-colored or trimmed with retro-reflective tape if children are allowed out after dark.
- Carrying flashlights will help children see better and be seen more clearly.

Children should understand and follow these rules:

On the way

- Do not enter homes or apartments without adult supervision.
- Walk, do not run, from house to house. Do not cross yards and lawns where unseen objects or the uneven terrain can present tripping hazards.
- Walk on sidewalks, not in the street.
- Walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic if there are no sidewalks.

To ensure a safe trick-or-treat outing, parents are urged to:

Treats

- Give children an early meal before going out.
- Insist that treats be brought home for inspection before anything is eaten.
- Wash fruit and slice into small pieces.
- When in doubt, throw it out.

*Permission to reprint granted by the National Safety Council, a membership organization dedicated to protecting life and promoting health.

