

Halloween Safety Tips

It's that time of year again! Time for costumes, pumpkin carving, parties, scary decorations, and Trick-or-Treating. Make sure this Halloween is not only fun, but safe for your whole family.

BEFORE HALLOWEEN:



Plan costumes that are bright and reflective. Add reflective tape to costumes and Trick-or-Treat bags for greater visibility.



Make sure shoes fit well and costumes are short enough to prevent entanglement, tripping, or contact with flame. Buy costumes, wigs, and accessories with a label clearly indicating they are **flame resistant**. Review with your children "Stop-Drop-Roll", should their clothes catch fire.



Secure emergency identification (name, address, phone number) discreetly within Halloween attire or on a bracelet. Teach kids to how call 9-1-1, or the local emergency number, if they have an emergency or become lost. Remind them that 9-1-1 can be dialed free at any pay phone.



Masks can limit or block eyesight. Consider using non-toxic makeup and decorative hats as safer alternatives.



Think twice before using simulated knives, guns or swords. If such props must be used, be certain they do not appear authentic and are soft and flexible to prevent injury.



Obtain flashlights with fresh batteries for all children and their escorts. This is a great time to buy fresh batteries for your home Smoke Alarms.



Consider purchasing individually packaged healthy food alternatives or safe non-food treats for those who visit your home.



Take extra effort to eliminate tripping hazards on your porch and walkway. Check your property for low tree limbs, support wires or garden hoses that may prove hazardous to young children rushing from house to house.



Learn or review CPR skills to aid someone who is choking or having a heart attack.

BEFORE NIGHTFALL ON HALLOWEEN:



A good meal prior to parties and trick-or-treating will discourage youngsters from filling up on Halloween treats.



Consider fire safety when decorating. Use battery powered lanterns or chemical light sticks instead of candles in decorations and costumes. Do not overload electrical outlets with holiday lighting or special effects. Keep Jack O' Lanterns and hot electric lamps away from decorations, drapes, flammable materials or areas where children will be standing or walking.



Plan and review with your children the route and behavior which is acceptable to you. Agree on a specific time when revelers must return home. Older children and escorts should wear a watch, and carry coins for non-emergency phone calls.



Confine, segregate or otherwise prepare household pets for a night of frightful sights and sounds. Be sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars/proper ID tags. Consult your vet for further advice.



Remind all household drivers to remain cautious and drive slowly throughout the community. Adult partygoers should establish a designated driver.

WHEN TRICK-OR-TREATING:

If your children are trick-or-treating this Halloween, a parent or responsible adult should always accompany young children on their neighborhood rounds. Remind Trick-or-Treaters:



Stay in a group and communicate where they will be going.



Only go to homes with a porch light on.



Remain on well-lit streets and always use the sidewalk. If no sidewalk is available, walk at the farthest edge of the roadway facing traffic. Never cut across yards or use alleys. Remove any mask or item that will limit eyesight before crossing a street, driveway or alley.



Always walk. Never run across a street. Only cross the street as a group in established crosswalks. Obey all traffic and pedestrian regulations.



Don't assume the right of way. Motorists may have trouble seeing Trick-or-Treaters. Just because one car stops, doesn't mean others will!



Never enter a stranger's home or car for a treat. Never consume food items or drinks that may be offered at homes while Trick-or-Treating. No treats are to be eaten from the Trick-or-Treat bag until they are thoroughly checked by an adult at home.



Law Enforcement authorities should be notified immediately of any suspicious or unlawful activity.

AFTER TRICK-OR-TREATING:



Wait until children are home to sort and check treats. Though tampering is rare, a responsible adult should closely examine all treats and throw away any spoiled, unwrapped or suspicious items.



Try to apportion treats for the days following Halloween.



Although sharing is encouraged, make sure items that can cause choking (such as hard candies), are given only to those of an appropriate age.

FUN ALTERNATIVES TO TRICK-OR-TREATING:



Ask around your community and check your local newspaper for information on special events.



Community Centers, Shopping Malls and Houses of Worship often have organized festivities.



Share the fun by arranging a visit to a Retirement Home or Senior Center.



Create an alliance with College Fraternities, Sororities or Service Clubs for children's face painting or a carnival.

These "Halloween Safety Tips" were created by the Los Angeles Fire Department for families. Reprinted and adapted with permission, by the Title I Dissemination Project, 2001. For more information, visit the LA Fire Departments Web site at www.lafd.org/hween.htm.