

Halloween Safety Guidance

From All the “Trolls and Goblins” in the Monterey County Office of Emergency Services



BEFORE HALLOWEEN:

- Plan costumes that are bright and reflective. Make sure that shoes fit well and that costumes are short enough to prevent tripping, entanglement or contact with flame.
- ***Carefully chose costumes that are sensitive to recent national events and affected populations.***
- Consider adding reflective tape or striping to costumes and Trick-or-Treat bags for greater visibility.
- Secure emergency identification (name, address, phone number) discreetly within Halloween attire or on a bracelet.
- Because masks can limit or block eyesight, consider non-toxic makeup and decorative hats as safer alternatives.
- When shopping for costumes, wigs and accessories, and look for and purchase only those with a label clearly indicating they are flame resistant.
- Think twice before allowing your children to have 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.
- Plan ahead to use only battery powered lanterns or chemical light-sticks in place of candles in decorations and costumes.
- Teach children to how call 9-1-1 (or their local emergency number) if they have an emergency or become lost. Remind them that 9-1-1 can be dialed free at any payphone.
- Review with your children the principle of "Stop-Drop-Roll", should their clothes catch on fire.
- Openly discuss appropriate and inappropriate behavior at Halloween time. ***Fireworks, vandalism, prank calls are not only unacceptable behavior, but are also illegal and punishable by law!***
- Consider purchasing individually packaged healthy food alternatives (or safe non-food treats) for those who visit your home. Do not give any unwrapped treats, open beverages, or items that may leave a “white powder or chalky” residue.
- Take extra effort to eliminate tripping hazards on your porch and walkway. Check around your property for low tree limbs, flowerpots, dog leashes, support wires, or garden hoses that may prove hazardous to young children rushing from house to house.

FUN ALTERNATIVES:

- ***Due to ongoing national events, carefully reflect on allowing your children to attend any non-supervised event or open neighborhood Trick-or-Treating. Consider wholesome, family fun alternatives as an option. Ask around your community and check your local newspaper for information on special events, or specific times for neighborhood Trick-or-Treating.***
- Cities, 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.
- Organize your own ***Adult supervised*** neighborhood Trick-or-Treat event for the children. A great opportunity to get to know your neighbors.

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. Do not overload electrical outlets with holiday lighting or special effects.
- Always keep Jack O' Lanterns and hot electric lamps away from drapes, decorations, flammable materials or areas where children will be standing or walking.
- Plan and review with your children the route and behavior that is acceptable to you. Agree on a specific time when revelers must return home.
- Along with flashlights for all, older children and escorts should wear a wristwatch and carry coins for non-emergency phone calls or carry a cellular phone.
- Confine, secure, segregate, or otherwise prepare household pets for an evening of frightful sights and sounds. Be sure that all dogs and cats are wearing collars and proper identification tags. Consult your veterinarian for further advice.
- Remind all household drivers to remain cautious and drive slowly throughout the community. Excited youngsters may forget some of these safety rules and dart out in front of your car. Drive defensively!
- Adult partygoers should establish a designated driver.

WHEN TRICK-OR-TREATING:

- A Parent or responsible Adult should ***always*** accompany young children on their neighborhood rounds.
- Remind the Trick-or-Treaters:
 - By using a flashlight, they can see and be seen by others.
 - 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 there is no sidewalk available, walk at the farthest edge of the roadway facing traffic.
 - Never cut across yards or use alleys, or run between parked cars.
 - Never enter a stranger's home, yard, or car for a treat.
 - Obey all traffic and pedestrian regulations. Always walk. Never run across a street.
 - Only cross the street as a group in established crosswalks (as recognized by local custom).
 - Remove any mask or item that will limit eyesight before crossing a street, driveway or alley.
 - Don't assume the right of way...motorists may have difficulty seeing the Trick-or-Treaters. Just because one car stops, doesn't mean others will!
 - ***Never consume unwrapped food items or open beverages that may be offered.***
 - ***No treats are to be eaten 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. Any item that is suspicious should be immediately reported to Law Enforcement authorities for appropriate action.***
- 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.

