



Tips to Ensure a Happy (and Safe) Halloween

Release Date: October 26, 2012

Contact: Jerad Albracht, 608-224-5007

Jim Dick, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

MADISON – Halloween is a night of fun and adventure for children and their families, but any activity where kids criss-cross neighborhood streets after dusk comes with some risk. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection offers the following suggestions to help make your Halloween a safe and memorable one.

Halloween safety starts well before the big day arrives. Tip #1: carve pumpkins safely. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, sixty-four percent of Halloween-related injuries between October and November last year were related to pumpkin carving. Leave all handling of knives and sharp objects to responsible adults.

For revelers of all ages, Halloween costumes should be short enough to prevent tripping and falling. High heels are a poor choice for the night’s adventures, and children in particular should wear well-fitting, sturdy shoes. Everyone should carry a flashlight and keep an eye out for hazards in their path.

“Preparing for Halloween is fun for kids and adults alike,” said Michelle Reinen, Director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection. “As you consider your costumes, take a few extra minutes to make yourself and your kids more visible to passing cars and to minimize your risk for falls.”

For trick or treaters:

- **Supervision is key.** Young children should have adult supervision and all children should be reminded to stay on sidewalks and not run out from between parked cars.
- **Remove drawstrings on children’s costumes.** It is illegal to sell children’s clothing in Wisconsin with a drawstring in the neck area, but resale shop may have old costumes where this hazard has not been removed. Examine resale and hand-me-down costumes and remove drawstrings.
- **Be aware of fire risks.** Make sure costumes—including masks, beards and wigs—are labeled “fire resistant,” and be careful of open flames such as candles and jack-o-lanterns. To minimize the risk of contact with candles and other fire sources, avoid costumes made with flimsy materials and outfits with big, baggy sleeves or billowing skirts.
- **Make children’s costumes clearly visible to motorists.** Children in light-colored outfits are easier to spot from passing vehicles. Add glow sticks, flashlights, reflectors and reflective tape to the costumes – these items can be found in bike shops or hardware stores.
- **Remove sharp or pointy objects from costumes.** Accessories like toy swords, knives and pitchforks may cause injury if a child falls in the dark. If a costume involves these types of accessories, make sure that they are constructed of soft and flexible materials.
- **Be certain that hats, masks and wigs do not obstruct vision.** Masks should fit securely and have eyeholes large enough for full vision. Consider using face paint or washable hair dye on children instead of masks and wigs.
- **Children should be told not to eat any treats before coming home.** Parents should carefully examine all treats for signs of tampering and discard anything not sealed in its original packaging.

(MORE)

For residents passing out treats:

- **Clear the pathways on your property.** Remove any yard tools, toys or foliage that may obstruct the sidewalk and path to your door.
- **Keep your property well lit.**
- **Consider your pet's well-being.** Move pets to an area of the home where they will not be bothered by the doorbell or knocking and where they will not pose a risk to revelers.
- **Light jack-o-lanterns with battery-powered candles instead of traditional candles.**

For additional information, visit the Bureau of Consumer Protection at datcp.wisconsin.gov, send an e-mail to datcphotline@wisconsin.gov or call the Consumer Protection Hotline toll-free at 1-800-422-7128.

Connect with us on Facebook at facebook.com/wiconsumer.

###