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Halloween Safety Tips

Halloween is not a *state* holiday. It is not an *official* holiday. But, it *is* becoming one of the fastest growing celebrations of the year. "Unfortunately, Halloween's heightened popularity can also mean the greater possibility for a variety of dangers and crimes," Sheriff Champagne warns.

Why? The Sheriff continues, "Simply because criminals can commit crimes in disguise without ever arousing suspicion. And, it's the one time of the year that homeowners willingly open their doors to strangers, expecting trick-or-treaters."

Whether you celebrate Halloween by going on a hay ride, carving pumpkins, going trick-or-treating or throwing a costume party, there *are* ways in which some common sense precautions can ensure safety and reduce the possibility of becoming a victim of crime or an unfortunate accident.

Although it is not possible to anticipate all of the dangers that can occur, Sheriff Champagne offers some straightforward tips for parents and children on helping to create a happy Halloween experience before, during and after the ghosts and goblins have faded away.

Before Halloween:

- Plan costumes and accessories that are bright, reflective, fit well and are flame resistant.
- For greater visibility, add reflective tape or striping to costumes and Trick-or-Treat bags.
- Secure emergency identification (name, address, phone number) discreetly within Halloween attire or on a bracelet.
- Consider non-toxic makeup as an alternative to masks that can block eyesight.
- Think twice before using simulated knives, guns or swords. If they are used, be certain they do not appear authentic and are soft and flexible to prevent injury.
- Plan and review with your children the route and behavior that is acceptable to you.
- Plan ahead to use only battery-powered lanterns or chemical light sticks in place of candles in decorations and costumes.
- Teach children how to call 9-1-1 if they have an emergency or become lost.
- Review with children the principle of "Stop-Drop-Roll," should their clothes catch fire.
- Openly discuss appropriate and inappropriate behavior at Halloween time.
- Consider purchasing individually packaged candies and treats for Trick-or-Treaters.
- Clear pathways on your porch and walkway to avoid trips and falls.
- Consider safe party guidelines when hosting an adult party.

During Trick-or-Treating:

- A parent or responsible adult should always accompany young children.

Remind Trick-or-Treaters:

- By using a flashlight, one 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 no sidewalk is available, walk at the farthest edge of the roadway facing traffic.
- Never cut across yards
- Never enter a stranger's home or car for a treat.
- Obey all traffic and pedestrian rules.
- Only cross the street as a group in established crosswalks.
- Remove any mask that will limit eyesight before crossing a street, driveway or alley.
- Do not assume the right of way. Motorists may have trouble seeing Trick-or-Treaters.
- Never consume food items or drinks 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. 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 cause choking (such as hard candies), are given only to those of an appropriate age.

Concluded Sheriff Champagne, "Remember, a few simple safety precautions can mean all the differences between a fun and memorable celebration, or one spoiled by an avoidable incident. Keep safe and have a great Halloween.