



October 2018

Have a Safe Halloween

Tips from Gwinnett County Safety Officials

On average, twice as many children in the United States are killed while walking on Halloween than any other day of the year. That's why the Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services is teaming up with Safe Kids Gwinnett and the Gwinnett County Police Department to provide safety tips for Halloween.

Public safety officials are urging parents to prepare kids to act safely and drivers to be particularly alert during trick-or-treat activities. "Parents should talk to their children before they go trick-or-treating," says Fire Educator Patty Schaefer, Coordinator for Safe Kids Gwinnett. While children may be focused on gathering candy and caught up in the excitement of festive holiday costumes, parents should be alert to the hazards that go along with crossing the street, approaching houses, open flames and making sure candy is safe to eat.

Firefighters warn against the use of open flames as part of your Halloween decorations. "Use a flameless candle for the Jack-o-lantern and choose decorations and costumes made of flame retardant materials to prevent accidental fires," says Gwinnett Fire Captain Tommy Rutledge. Costumes should fit properly. Billowing capes and baggy sleeves pose a tripping hazard as well as a fire hazard.

Police officers will be conducting routine patrols on Halloween and encourage motorists to slow-down and watch for children in the roadway and on the sidewalk. Parents should escort children as they trick-or-treat and help them cross the street at neighborhood crosswalks. Don't allow children to dart out from houses or between cars. Officers suggest trick-or-treating at familiar houses in your neighborhood and avoid dark or unlit areas. Stay in groups and always carry a flashlight.

Police also warn against the use of toy weapons such as guns and swords that may look authentic. Toy weapons should be easily recognizable and should not have sharp or jagged points. Children should never accept rides or candy from strangers.

Following the simple safety rules listed below can make for a fun and enjoyable Halloween Night.

TRICK-OR-TREATING

- Trick-or-treat in familiar neighborhoods
- Walk! Don't run from house to house and use the sidewalk if available
- Never enter the house while trick-or-treating
- Never accept a ride or go with strangers
- Stay in groups and carry a flashlight
- Report suspicious activity to the police immediately

MOTORISTS

- Drive slowly and remain cautious, especially in residential areas
- Watch for children walking in the street or standing in the median
- Obey all traffic and pedestrian regulations
- Avoid the use of drugs or alcohol during Halloween festivities, especially when driving

COSTUMES

- Wear bright colored costumes or provide reflective tape for darker materials
- Choose costumes that fit properly and are flame resistant
- Use soft, flexible props that won't cause an injury or be mistaken as authentic

HOME

- Use decorations that are made of flame resistive/non-combustible materials
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with festive lighting and sound equipment
- Choose flameless candles for the Jack-o-lantern or table and window displays
- Keep paper and dry (*Fall Season*) decorations away from excessive heat or open flames
- Eliminate fall or tripping hazards on the porch or walkway to the front door and light the path for a safe approach

CANDY

- Check all candy wrappers for signs of tampering
- Discard any candy that is open or unwrapped
- Avoid giving hard candy to small children

For additional information on Halloween safety, please contact the [Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services](#), Safe Kids Gwinnett or the [Gwinnett County Police Department](#).

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