



## Volunteer Fire Department



## Halloween Safety Tips

With witches, goblins, and superheroes descending on neighborhoods across America, the Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department offers parents some safety tips to help prepare their children for a safe and enjoyable trick-or-treat holiday. Halloween should be filled with surprise and enjoyment, and following some common sense practices can keep events safer and more fun.

### AFTER TRICK-OR-TREATING:

- Instruct your children to bring all candy home before eating it so that you can carefully inspect it for tampering. Children shouldn't snack while they're out trick-or-treating. Though tampering is rare, a responsible Adult should closely examine all treats and throw away any spoiled, unwrapped or suspicious items.
- Try to portion 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.
- If going to an adult Halloween party, make sure that you don't drink and drive. Use a designated driver if alcohol is being consumed.

### DID YOU KNOW:

During 1999-2002, decorations for special events accounted for an estimated 1,400 reported home structure fires in October, the majority involving candles as the heat source, and causing 110 civilian injuries and \$24 million in direct property damage per year. Source: NFPA's One-Stop Data Shop

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Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department  
670 Pacific Way/ PO Box 2530 Gearhart,  
Oregon 97138  
(503)738-7838—(503)738-9385 fax

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### 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
- 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 a mask can limit or block eyesight, consider non-toxic and hypoallergenic makeup or a decorative hat as a safe alternative.
- When shopping for costumes, wigs and accessories, purchase only those with a label indicating they are flame resistant.
- 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 flashlight with fresh batteries for all children and their escorts

### DID YOU KNOW:

In half (50%) of the home candle fires reported in 1999-2002, the fire started because the candle was too close to some combustible material. The candle was unattended, abandoned or discarded in 18% of the incidents.



- Plan ahead to use only battery powered lanterns or chemical lightsticks in place of candles in decorations and costumes.
- This is also a great time to buy fresh batteries for your home smoke alarms.
- Teach children their home phone number and how to call 9-1-1 if they have an emergency or become lost. Remind them that 9-1-1 can be dialed from any phone.

Instruct children to stay away from open flames or other heat sources. Be sure children know how to **stop, drop and roll** in the event their clothing catches fire. (Stop immediately, drop to the ground, covering your face with your hands, and roll over and over to extinguish flames.)

### BEFORE NIGHTFALL ON HALLOWEEN:

- A good meal prior to parties and trick-or-treating will discourage youngsters from filling up on Halloween treats.
- Instruct children who are attending parties at others' homes to locate the exits and plan how they would get out in an emergency.
- Consider fire safety when decorating. Do not overload electrical outlets with holiday lighting or special effects. And ensure nothing blocks escape routes.
- While children can help with the fun of decorating a Jack O' Lantern, leave the carving to adults.
- Dried flowers, cornstalks and crepe paper are highly flammable. Keep these and other decorations and areas where children and pets will be standing or walking well away from All Jack O' Lanterns, Open flames and Heat sources, including light bulbs, heaters, etc.
- Plan and review with your children the route and behavior which is acceptable to you.
- Do not permit children to bicycle, roller-blade or skateboard.
- Agree on a specific time when children must return home.
- Older children and escorts should wear a wristwatch and carry coins for non-emergency phone calls.
- Confine, 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.

### WHEN TRICK-OR-TREATING:

- A Parent or responsible Adult should always accompany young children on their neighborhood rounds.
  - By using a flashlight, they can see and be seen by others.
  - Stay in a group, walk slowly and communicate where you are going.
  - Only trick-or-treat in well known neighborhoods at homes that have 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.
  - Never enter a stranger's home 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 trouble seeing 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.
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