

Halloween safety tips to make the night a little less scary.



No one wants a nightmare on (insert your street). To trade in spooks and scares for added safety this October 31, we've created a list of Halloween safety tips for everyone involved.

Tips for decorating your haunted house

- Use battery-operated candles instead of real flames in jack-o'-lanterns to prevent fires.
- Look for the UL marking on the packages of electric decorations. This certifies that any lighted home or lawn décor has been rigorously tested for safety by Underwriters Laboratories. A red UL mark means the decoration is safe for indoor and outdoor use. Green indicates it's safe for indoor use only.
- Turn off all decorative lights before going to bed.
- Secure any railings little ghosts and ghouls may use to get up to your front door.
- Clear any tripping or slipping hazards from your walkway and front yard, such as electrical cords, hoses, sprinklers, branches, and debris.
- Make sure your home and walkway are well lit. Add additional lighting if needed and replace old bulbs.
- Contain your pets to avoid accidents or scares. Even the friendliest dog or cat can spook a small child and send them running into possible danger.
- Make sure your homeowners insurance is up to date ... just in case there's an accident on your property.

Tips for costume safety

- Make sure kids' costumes are flame retardant.
- Choose costumes that fit snugly. Costumes that are too bulky or large can drag on the ground, knock items over, and become tripping hazards.
- Opt for face paint and makeup instead of masks. Masks can make it harder for kids to see where they're going. Use only clean, hypoallergenic makeup and test it in advance to ensure it doesn't irritate your child's skin.
- Choose flexible props like foam swords, plastic fairy wands, etc. to avoid possible injury to your child or others.
- Choose lighter-colored costumes when possible. Put reflective tape on darker costumes for visibility.
- Wear or carry glowstick necklaces and/or bracelets for visibility.
- Bring a flashlight with a full charge or fresh batteries.

Tips for safe trick-or-treating

- Check your community's website for any official Halloween guidelines, maps, start and stop times, and more.
- Enforce sidewalk rules for kids. While it can be tempting to cut across lawns or streets to gather as much candy as possible, darting between vehicles, driveways, yards, roads, and unlit areas can put kids in harm's way.
- Be sure children 12 years of age and younger are accompanied by an adult or teen sibling throughout the night.
- Advise kids to never enter someone's home or accept a ride from someone they don't know.
- Instruct children to trick-or-treat only at houses that have lights on.
- Implement a buddy system for older kids, too. Make sure they're with a group of friends and you know their projected route.
- If you leave a bowl of candy out for kids, opt for plastic. A broken glass bowl could lead to dangerous situations.

Tips for your treats

- Tell your children not to eat any of their candy until they get home so you can look it over for any suspicious items.
- Discard any candy that has been damaged, is partially open, or has no wrapper at all.
- Discard homemade treats unless you're sure which neighbor they came from.

Tips for drivers

- Avoid driving on Halloween when possible. See if you can work from home or leave work early to be home well before trick-or-treating begins.
- If you must be on the roads, drive under the normal speed limit in neighborhoods and keep your head on a swivel.
- Put your headlights on earlier in the day, even if it's still light out.
- Protect your car. Car theft rises on Halloween night, so store your vehicle in your garage or in a well-lit area.

With these Halloween safety tips, both trickers and treaters can have a sweeter Halloween. For even more protection throughout the coming holiday season, talk to a local, independent agent about our comprehensive home and auto policies.