



**STATE SAFETY OFFICE**  
HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK ARMY NATIONAL GUARD  
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## **SAFETY MESSAGE 20-10**

### **October is Halloween Safety**

While most people think of this season as a time for fun and treats for children, Halloween-related injuries do occur. Such injuries can be prevented if parents closely supervise school-aged children during trick-or-treat activities.

Make this year's holiday a safe one by following these safety tips.

#### **Costumes:**

Halloween-related injuries often involve burns from flammable costumes and decorations, including ignition from open flames, such as candles and jack o' lanterns. Other accidents occur due to abrasions from sharp objects attached to masks or costumes.

Parents should be sure to look for fabrics labeled "flame resistant" or choose flame-resistant fabrics such as nylon or polyester when purchasing or making costumes, masks, beards and wigs. Flame-resistant fabrics resist burning and should extinguish quickly.

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. Additionally, be cautious of long draped items that could cause an entanglement hazard.

#### **Additional costume-related tips include:**

- If your child wears a mask, hat or scarf as part of his or her costume, make sure the item fits securely, provides adequate ventilation and has eye holes large enough to allow full vision.
- Apply non-toxic face paint or cosmetics directly to the face as an alternative to masks.
- Allow your child to wear short costumes and properly fitting shoes to prevent tripping.

- Use costumes that are light or bright enough to make children more visible at night.
- Decorate costumes, bags, and sacks with reflective tape and stickers.
- Children should carry flashlights to see and be seen.

### **Trick-or-treating:**

Both children and adults need to give real attention to safety on this annual day of make-believe. With a little extra thought and planning, you can make sure that all children have fun and safe outings on Halloween. When preparing children to trick-or-treat, please be sure to:

- Accompany children under age 10.
- Attach the name, address and phone number of children to their clothes in case they become separated from adults.
- Allow your child to travel only in familiar areas, along a pre-established route with a flashlight to guide their way.
- Tell your child to walk, not run, making sure to stop at all street corners and look left, right and left again before crossing.
- Never allow your child to dart out into a street or cross between parked cars. They should cross streets only at intersections and crosswalks.
- Teach children their home phone number so they could call home if necessary.
- Restrict trick-or-treating visits to homes with an illuminated porch or outside light. Tell children never to enter a home or an apartment building.
- The sidewalk is the safest place for trick-or-treaters. Teach children not to cut across yards.
- Establish set time for children to return home.

### **Candy:**

It is a good idea for children to eat a good meal before trick or treating so that they don't fill up on holiday treats. Candy should not be sampled until children are home so their parents can first sort and check treats.

It is rare for candy to be tampered with at Halloween, however, it is a good idea for parents to inspect the candy to make sure that each piece is individually wrapped and safely sealed. If the candy is not wrapped or looks suspicious, it is better to just throw it away. Finally, candy that can cause choking in very young children should be discarded or given to older children.

Parents or Caregivers should carefully examine any toys or novelty items received by tick-or-treaters under 3 years of age. Do not allow young children to have any items that are small enough to present a choking hazard or that have small parts or components that could separate during use. Many of these items have warning labels. If you're unsure about an item, parents can buy a child safety choke tube that functions as a small parts tester. A choke tube is designed to be about the same diameter as a child's windpipe. If

an object fits inside of the tube tester, then it is too small to be within reach of a young child. Choke tubes can be found in children's specialty stores.

By taking some precautions, families can ensure that their Halloween will be both spooky and safe.



To find previously published Safety Messages go to our NYARNG Safety Website:

<http://dmna.ny.gov/safety/>

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