



Safe Practices for Halloween 2009



On October 31, 2009 many children across Maryland will spend hours in close proximity to cars as they navigate through neighborhoods gathering candy. Please help Safe Kids Maryland make pedestrian safety the top priority for both drivers and parents. This year, Halloween falls on the night the clocks are turned back, but kids will still be out while it is dark – making it harder for drivers to see them. This lack of visibility makes it important for drivers to slow down and watch out for trick-or-treaters, especially around crosswalks.

Pedestrian safety is not just the responsibility of the driver, however, parents can do their part to help kids stay out of the emergency room on Halloween by emphasizing safe pedestrian behaviors before they go out trick-or-treating. On average, twice as many kids are killed while walking on Halloween compared to other days of the year.

REMEMBER: Children younger than age 12 should not be alone crossing streets at night without an adult. If older kids are mature enough to go trick-or-treating without adult supervision, parents should make sure they go in a group and stick to a predetermined route with good lighting. Halloween is an exciting holiday for children, but they can be vulnerable to injury on this night.

To ensure trick-or-treaters stay safe, Safe Kids Maryland recommends that children:

- ∞ **Cross the street safely at corners**, using traffic signals and crosswalks. Look left, right and left again when crossing and keep looking as you cross. Walk, don't run, across the street.
- ∞ **Walk on sidewalks or paths**. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible. Children should walk on direct routes with the fewest street crossings.
- ∞ **Slow down and stay alert** – watch out for cars that are turning or backing up and never dart out into the street or cross in between parked cars.
- ∞ **Costumes can be both creative and safe**. Decorate costumes and bags with reflective tape or stickers and, if possible, choose light colors. Masks can obstruct a child's vision, so choose non-toxic face paint and make-up whenever possible instead. Have kids carry glow sticks or flashlights in order to see better, as well as be seen by drivers.

To ensure trick-or-treaters stay safe, Safe Kids Maryland recommends that drivers:

- ∞ **Slow down** in residential neighborhoods and school zones. Remember that popular trick-or-treating hours are during the typical rush-hour period of 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.
- ∞ **Be especially alert** and take extra time to look for kids at intersections, on medians and on curbs. Children are excited on Halloween and may move in unpredictable ways.
- ∞ **Slowly and carefully** enter and exit driveways and alleys.
- ∞ **Reduce any distractions** inside your car, such as talking on the phone or eating, so you can concentrate on the road and your surroundings.

Everyone: Remind children to only eat treats that parents have checked and are in original and unopened wrappers.”

For more tips on how to help kids become safer pedestrians on Halloween, as well as throughout the year, visit www.usa.safekids.org/wtw/halloween2009.html or contact the Safe Kids Maryland & EMSC Program office at 410-706-1758 or www.safekidsmd.org

Safe Kids - Walk This Way