



On a Night of Fun & Frights, Pedestrian Safety Should Be the Primary Focus

From SafeKids.org

On a night when many children spend hours in close proximity to cars as they navigate through neighborhoods gathering candy, pedestrian safety should be a top priority for both drivers and parents. On average, twice as many fatalities occur among children while walking on Halloween compared to other days of the year. Halloween falls on a Monday this year, and many kids will be out late trick-or-treating while it is dark - making it harder for drivers to see them. Because of this lack of visibility, it is important for drivers to take extra precautions to watch out for trick-or-treaters, especially around crosswalks.

"The simple act of slowing down on neighborhood roads will not only make Halloween more enjoyable for everyone, but also it could save lives," said Moira Donahue, Director of the Walk This Way program, Safe Kids' pedestrian safety program. "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," said Donahue. "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."



Top safety tips for parents:

- Cross the street safely at corners. Use 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.

Top safety tips for 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.

For more tips on how to help kids become safer pedestrians throughout the year, visit websites for WalkingInfo.org: <http://www.walkinginfo.org/>, ODOT-TSD Safe Routes to School: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/saferoutes.shtml>, and Safe Kids: <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/safety-spotlight/halloween-safety/>. To read the new Safe Kids *Halloween Safety Research Report* visit: <http://www.safekids.org/our-work/research/reports/halloween-research-report.pdf>.