

October 20, 3:20 pm

With the recent announcement of the time for the University of Oklahoma home football game on October 31, 2009, the City of Norman is recommending Trick or Treat be observed in Norman, on Friday, October 30, 2009 in hopes of protecting participating children from the increased traffic. The increased traffic might also impact families that travel within Norman and into surrounding communities to celebrations with friends and other family members.

For those parents seeking an alternative to door-to-door Trick or Treating, many nursing homes and assisted living centers usually participate in Trick-or-Treat, and other organizations may also plan to participate – parents may wish to consult their local newspapers for ads from businesses and organizations that may host special events. Sooner Mall merchants have announced they will hand out treats from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Friday, October 30, 2009.

The Norman Police Department has the following recommendations to help make the occasion a safe and enjoyable time for all concerned:

To help ensure the safety and enjoyment of your costumed visitors, residents should:

- Turn on exterior lights to illuminate their path and to signal your participation.
- Pick up or repair possible tripping hazards on the approach to your front door.
- If you have pets that may frighten or be a hazard to children, isolate them away from the front door.
- If you plan to give toys instead of food items, make sure that they are non-toxic and free of small parts that may constitute a choking hazard.

Motorists should be especially watchful for Trick or Treaters

- Watch for children darting out from between parked cars.
- Be aware that children walking next to, or on the edge of the roadway may suddenly step, fall, or be pushed by a companion into the street. Give them a wide berth if possible, and be ready to take evasive action.
- Be especially watchful for pedestrians on the sidewalks when entering and leaving driveways and parking lots.
- Be aware that, despite advice to the contrary, some children will be allowed to go out in dark colored costumes. Keep in mind that some may be hard to see after dark.

To prepare children for their Trick or Treat outings, parents should:

- Make sure that an adult or an older, trustworthy sibling or family friend accompanies and supervises younger children.
- Review traffic safety rules. Caution them to walk, not run from house to house, and to avoid cutting across yards and lawns where landscaping, unseen objects or uneven terrain can cause them to trip. Also re-emphasize the “Stranger Danger” guidelines.
- For those young folks allowed to go out on their own, plan beforehand the route they will take, and emphasize that they are not to deviate from it without letting you know. Set a return time, and ensure that the route is free of possible safety hazards.

- Teach your children to stop only at houses or apartments that are well-lit, and to never enter a stranger's home or vehicle. If exterior lights are off at a home, this is likely an indication that the resident does not wish to participate.

Costume Design

- Use only fire-retardant materials for costumes.
- Plan for all types of weather. Costumes should be loose enough to allow for warm clothes underneath if it is cool, and light and breathable enough to prevent overheating if the evening is unusually warm.
- Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries on Halloween. Costumes should not be so long that they may cause the child to trip.
- Pin a note with the child's name, address and phone number inside a pocket in case the youngster gets separated from the group.
- If children are to be Trick or Treating after dark, outfits should be made with light colored materials. Strips of reflective tape can be used on clothing to increase visibility. Equip each child with a flashlight, chemical light sticks or glowing jewelry. Shoes, clothing, and accessories with flashing lights are also very effective.
- Dress the child with well-fitting and appropriate footwear - preferably sneakers. High-heeled, oversized, or costume footwear, while appropriate for parties, can create a safety hazard when walking at night.

Masks and Makeup

- Bear in mind that masks may obstruct a child's vision. Facial make-up is recommended as an alternative.
- When buying makeup for Trick or Treating, check the packaging to ensure that they meet safety standards and are non-toxic. The manufacturer's instructions should be closely followed in their use.
- If masks are worn, they must have eye holes large enough for unrestricted vision, and should have nose and mouth openings to avoid breathing problems.

Carried Items

- Props such as knives, swords, martial arts weapons, etc., should be made of materials that can't cause injury if children accidentally fall on them or. Prop weapons should be easy to distinguish from the real thing.
- Bags or sacks carried to hold treats should be light-colored or trimmed with reflective tape.
- If flashlights will be carried, caution children against shining them into the eyes of other children or motorists.

Treat Safety

To ensure a safe trick-or-treat experience, parents are urged to:

- Insist that treats be brought home for inspection before anything is eaten.
- Give children an early meal before they set out on their rounds. This will prevent them from getting hungry on the way and being tempted to get into their goodies.
- If fruit items are to be eaten, wash them thoroughly and slice them into small pieces to reveal any foreign objects that may be present.

- Look at wrappers to ensure that they have no cuts or punctures that might indicate tampering.
- Whatever the treat, when in doubt, throw it out.