



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

P.O. BOX 10070 – BROOKSVILLE, FL 34603-0070 FAX 352 796-0493 PHONE 352 754-6830

Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
Community/Media Relations Manager, 352-797-3609

Re: Halloween Safety Tips

Date: October 21, 2016

Halloween can be a fun holiday for kids, but a worrisome one for parents. Concerns about children's safety, whether they are out trick or treating or back home with their bags of goodies, can darken the day faster than a black cat. To make Halloween a treat, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office is offering these simple Halloween safety tips.

Adults

- Welcome trick-or-treaters with your porch lights and any exterior lights ON.
- Sweep leaves from sidewalks and steps.
- Clear the porch and/or front yard of obstacles a child could trip over.
- Restrain household pets.
- Use a glow stick in the jack-o-lantern instead of a candle to avoid a fire hazard.
- Patrol your neighborhood occasionally to discourage speeding motorists, acts of malicious mischief and/or crimes against children.
- Report any and all suspicious activity to your local law enforcement agency immediately.
- Keep all of the doors locked at your home (even if you are just "out front" handing out candy). Halloween is a night when many homes are burglarized because parents are out with the kids.
- Do not give out homemade or unwrapped treats to children.

Children

- Do not go inside anyone's home.
- Do not accept rides from strangers.
- Keep a safe distance from moving cars.
- Cross the street only at street corners, never between parked cars, and never diagonally across an intersection.

- Look in ALL directions before crossing a street. Obey all traffic signals. Walk, never run across the street.
- Use sidewalks – NOT the street for walking.
- Do not take shortcuts through back yards, alleys, or parks.
- Do not eat any treat until your parent has inspected it.
- Be cautious around pets and any other animals.

Motorists

- Exercise extreme caution when operating your vehicle.
- Be alert for excited youngsters whose vision may be obscured by masks. **These children may inadvertently dart in front of your vehicle if unattended.**
- Slow down.

Trick or Treat Tips

- Be sure costumes are flame retardant.
- Keep costume short to prevent tripping/falling (bumps in the night).
- Try make up instead of a mask that may obstruct vision (when crossing streets and going up and down steps). Masks can also be hot.
- Be sure kids wear light colored costumes or reflective tape on costumes so they can be seen by drivers.
- Create a map of a safe trick or treat area. Set a time limit for the kids to go by.
- Kids should stay in groups and parents should accompany young children.
- Older kids should trick or treat with friends, and parents should KNOW where they are going.
- Tell older kids to stop only at familiar houses and only when the lights are on.
- Try to get your kids to trick or treat while it is still light out.
- If it is dark out, make sure they take a flashlight with them.
- Make sure children know their home address and telephone number(s).
- Make sure children know how to use 9-1-1 properly.
- Teach children how to say “NO” in a loud voice if someone tries to get them to go somewhere, accept anything other than a treat, or leave with them.
- Teach children not to approach vehicles.

The Office of Sheriff:

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, and remains accountable to them.