



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Halloween Safety Tips

Date: October 25, 2021

Sheriff Al Nienhuis and the men and women of the Hernando County Sheriff's office want everyone to have lots of spooky fun and be eerily safe this Halloween.

If your ghosts and goblins, witches and wizards, or vampires and zombies are heading out to collect treats this year, please take a few minutes to read through our **Halloween Safety Tips**.

Adults

- Consider CDC guidelines regarding gatherings, physical distancing, etc.
- 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.
- Plan costumes that are bright and reflective. Be sure that shoes fit well and that costumes are short enough to prevent tripping or contact with a flame.
- Consider adding reflective tape to costumes and/or trick or treat bags.
- Try non-toxic make up instead of a mask that may obstruct vision (when crossing streets and going up and down steps). Masks can also be hot.
- 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.
- Older children, who are going out without an adult, should take a cell phone with them.
- 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 fresh batteries) 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, ran unopposed in 2016, and was re-elected in 2020. Sheriff Nienhuis remains accountable to the people of Hernando County.