

From the Disney Family Editors: Following these suggestions can make your Halloween both safe and fun.

Frail skeletons and fluorescent Jack O' Lanterns decorate homes, while children disguised as witches, ghosts and goblins begin flocking out onto neighborhood streets in search of treats. As Halloween approaches, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) wants you to know that like children, Halloween's hidden dangers also come in disguise.

CPSC is aware of serious Halloween-related injuries involving burns from flammable costumes and decorations, including ignition from open flames, such as candles and Jack O' Lanterns. Additional incidents have involved abrasions from sharp objects attached to masks or costumes.

"One of the greatest problems is kids dressed up in homemade costumes that are not flame-resistant," said Acting CPSC Chairman Nancy Nord. "If parents make a costume, choose inherently flame-resistant fabrics, such as nylon or polyester, and avoid long draped items that could cause an entanglement hazard."

To help keep children safe, CPSC enforces the Flammable Fabrics Act and recalls products at Halloween and throughout the year that can cause injury.

Make this year's holiday a safe one by following these safety tips on costumes, treats and decorations:

Costumes:

When purchasing costumes, masks, beards and wigs, look for flame-resistant fabrics such as nylon or polyester, or look for the label "Flame Resistant." Flame-resistant fabrics will resist burning and should extinguish quickly. To minimize the risk of contact with candles and other fire sources, avoid costumes made with flimsy materials and outfits with big, baggy sleeves or billowing skirts.

- * Purchase or make costumes that are light, bright and clearly visible to motorists.

- * For greater visibility during dusk and darkness, decorate or trim costumes with reflective tape that will glow in the beam of a car's headlights. Bags or sacks also should be light colored or decorated with reflective tape. Reflective tape is usually available in hardware, bicycle and sporting goods stores.

- * Children should carry flashlights to see and be seen.

Costumes should fit well and not drag on the ground to guard against trips and falls.

- * Children should wear well-fitting, sturdy shoes. Oversized high heels are not a good idea.

- * Tie hats and scarves securely to prevent them from slipping over children's eyes and obstructing vision.

- * If your child wears a mask, make sure it fits securely, provides adequate ventilation, and has eye holes large enough to allow full vision.

Swords, knives and similar costume accessories should be made of soft, flexible materials.

Treats

- * Warn children not to eat any treats until an adult has examined them carefully for evidence of tampering.

- * Carefully examine any toys or novelty items received by trick-or-treaters under three years of age. Do not

allow young children to have any items that are small enough to present a choking hazard or that have small parts or components that could separate during use and present a choking hazard.

Decorations

- * Keep candles and Jack O' Lanterns away from landings and doorsteps where costumes could brush against the flame.

- * Remove obstacles from lawns, steps and porches when expecting trick-or-treaters.

- * Indoors, keep candles and Jack O' Lanterns away from curtains, decorations and other combustibles that could catch fire. Do not leave burning candles unattended.

- * Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory. Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections.

- * Discard damaged sets.

- * Don't overload extension cords.

Make this year's holiday a safe one by following these safety tips on costumes, treats and decorations. CPSC also has a safety alert on Halloween safety tips.
