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N e w s R e l e a s e

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Sheriff Champagne advises, "Take precautions for a safe Halloween"

Halloween signals one of fall's first and most popular events, and kids are eager to participate in all aspects of its fun-filled festivities. "But sadly, Halloween's heightened popularity can sometimes mean the greater the possibility for a variety of dangers and mishaps," Sheriff Champagne warns.

"Many times when parents think of Halloween safety, the first thing they do is remind their kids not to eat unwrapped treats. And that's good, but there's so much more to Halloween safety," Sheriff Champagne said.

Halloween is THE night for pranks! Toilet papering houses and the like fall into that category. The Sheriff says to let your children know that you want them to enjoy themselves, but that some tricks have the potential to hurt others or vandalize property. Tell your children that you not only disapprove of vandalism, but that it is against the law. Most important, for safety's sake, Sheriff Champagne says, "Know your children's plans before they go out with friends."

In whatever way you and your children choose to celebrate Halloween, there *are* ways in which some common sense precautions can ensure safety and reduce the possibility of becoming a victim of crime or an unfortunate accident.

Although it is not possible to anticipate all possibilities, risks and dangers, Sheriff Champagne offers some straightforward tips for parents and children to help create a happy Halloween experience before, during and after the ghosts and goblins have faded into the night.

Before Halloween

Plan costumes and accessories that are bright, reflective, fit well and are flame resistant. For greater visibility, add reflective tape or striping to costumes and Trick-or-Treat bags. Secure emergency identification (name, address, phone number) discreetly within Halloween attire or on a bracelet.

Consider non-toxic makeup as an alternative to masks that can block eyesight.

Think twice before using simulated knives, guns or swords. If they are used, be certain they do not appear authentic and are soft and flexible to prevent injury.

Plan and review with your children the route and behavior which are acceptable to you.

Plan ahead to use only battery powered lanterns or chemical light sticks in place of candles in

decorations and costumes.

This is also a great time to buy fresh batteries for your home Smoke Alarms.

Teach children how to call 9-1-1 (or their local emergency number) if they have an emergency or become lost. Remind them that 9-1-1 can be dialed free at any payphone.

Review with children the principle of “Stop-Drop-Roll,” should their clothes catch fire.

Clear pathways on your porch and walkway to avoid trips and falls.

Consider safe party guidelines when hosting an adult or office party.

During Trick-or-Treating

A parent or responsible adult should always accompany young children.

Remind Trick-or-Treaters

By using a flashlight, one can see and be seen by others.

Stay in a group and communicate where they will be going.

Only go to homes with a porch light on.

Remain on well-lit streets and always use the sidewalk.

If no sidewalk is available, walk at the farthest edge of the roadway facing traffic.

Never cut across yards or use alleys.

Never enter a stranger’s home or car for a treat.

Obey all traffic and pedestrian rules.

Always walk across a street. Never run.

Only cross the street as a group in established crosswalks.

Remove any mask that will limit eyesight before crossing a street, driveway or alley.

Do not assume the right of way. Motorists may have trouble seeing Trick-or-Treaters.

Never consume food items or drinks that may be offered.

No treats are to be eaten until they are thoroughly checked by an adult at home.

Law enforcement authorities should be notified immediately of any suspicious or unlawful activity.

After Trick-or-Treating

Wait until children are home to sort and check treats. A responsible adult should closely examine all treats and throw away any spoiled, unwrapped or suspicious items.

Try to apportion treats for the days following Halloween.

Although sharing is encouraged, make sure items that can cause choking (such as hard candies), are given only to those of an appropriate age.

Concluded Sheriff Champagne, “Remember, a few simple safety precautions can mean all the difference between a fun and memorable celebration, or one spoiled by an avoidable incident. Keep safe and have a great Halloween.”