

**INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY**  
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Halloween is an exciting holiday for kids and parents alike. As a parent of two young children, I get to see the excitement and anticipation as the kids choose their costumes in preparation for the big day. So that Halloween is remembered as a happy event, it is important to follow some basic safety precautions as you prepare your trick-or-treater(s). The following tips are not only for the trick-or-treater but are good reminders for all of us as well.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that costumes be made out of flame resistant materials that do not have big baggy sleeves or billowing skirts and are not flimsy. This reduces the risk that costumes will come into contact with candles or other ignition sources.

Costumes should be light and bright in order to make them clearly visible to motorists. You can add reflective tape to costumes so they will glow in the beam of a car's headlights. Using a light colored bag or sack, or decorating it with reflective tape, is an excellent way to increase visibility of your trick-or-treater. It is a good idea for children to carry a flashlight to see where they are going. Costumes should be short enough to prevent children from tripping and falling. Shoes should be well fitting and sturdy for safe walking. Hats and scarves should be securely tied to prevent them from slipping over children's eyes. It is highly suggested that children wear a cosmetic mask rather than a loose fitting one that may obscure vision or breathing. If you use a mask, be sure it fits securely and has eye holes large enough to allow full vision. Swords, knives or other such accessories should be made of a soft and flexible material.

Children should be accompanied by an adult and be encouraged to walk, not run, from house to house. They should also use the sidewalk and not cross through lawns where clotheslines, lawn ornaments or other objects could present dangers. Avoid walking on the street if possible. Trick-or-treaters should only go to homes where they know the residents and where a light has been left on to welcome them. Children should not enter homes.

For those of us who will be welcoming trick-or-treaters, consider removing obstacles from the lawn, steps and porches to increase the children's safety. It would be best to place candlelit jack-o-lanterns away from porches or steps to reduce the chance that costumes could brush into the fire. Indoor jack-o-lanterns should be kept away from curtains, decorations and other furnishings that could be ignited.

Motorists must watch out for children crossing the street or for children darting out from parked cars. Be particularly watchful as you enter or exit driveways or alleys.

Lastly, remind youngsters not to eat any treats they have received until they get home and you have had a chance to look them over. If you would like more information, contact the Grundy office of ISU Extension. Have a safe and fun Halloween!