

## **Keep Your Ghosts and Goblins Safe This Halloween**

Child pedestrian deaths double on Halloween night

**Topeka** – Halloween is known as a scary holiday, but sometimes not for the right reason. With potential dangers such as pedestrian accidents, falls, burns and poisonings, families should keep safety top-of-mind to ensure this holiday is a safe one.

On average, children are more than twice as likely to be hit by a vehicle and killed on Halloween than on any other day of the year. Drivers need to be extra alert as there will be more children on the streets and sidewalks – and those kids may be focused on gathering candy and the excitement of the holiday rather than being careful while crossing streets. "Safe Kids Kansas urges drivers to slow down and pay close attention on neighborhood roads to make Halloween more safe and enjoyable for everyone," added Sage.

"Kids need safety instruction before they go out trick-or-treating," says Cherie Sage, State Director for Safe Kids Kansas. "Many kids will be out trick-or-treating while it is dark when it is more difficult for drivers to see them. There are several easy and effective rules that parents can share with kids to help reduce their risk of injury. For example, children younger than age 12 should not be alone crossing streets on Halloween without an adult. If older kids are mature enough to go trick-or-treating without adult supervision, parents should make sure they go in a group and stick to a planned route with good lighting." While it's a good idea for children to have a cell phone with them in case of an emergency, remind them to pay attention to their surroundings, and not be distracted from hazards because they are texting or talking on the phone.

While pedestrian safety is a main concern on Halloween, parents and kids should also be careful when dealing with candy. "While kids never want to wait to dive into their candy, it is best to check sweets for signs of tampering before children are allowed to eat them," says Sage. "Remind children to only eat treats in original and unopened wrappers."

### **Walk Safely**

- Cross the street at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Look left, right and left again when crossing and keep looking as you cross.
- Put electronic devices down and keep heads up and walk, don't run, across the street.
- Teach children to make eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them.
- Always walk on sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible. Children should walk on direct routes with the fewest street crossings.
- Watch for cars that are turning or backing up. Teach children to never dart out into the street or cross between parked cars.



### **Trick or Treat With an Adult**

- Children under the age of 12 should not be alone at night without adult supervision. If kids are mature enough to be out without supervision, they should stick to familiar areas that are well lit and trick-or-treat in groups.

### **Keep Costumes Both Creative and Safe**

- Decorate costumes and bags with reflective tape or stickers and, if possible, choose light colors.
- Choose face paint and makeup whenever possible instead of masks, which can obstruct a child's vision.
- Have kids carry glow sticks or flashlights to help them see and be seen by drivers.
- When selecting a costume, make sure it is the right size to prevent trips and falls.

### **Drive Extra Safely on Halloween**

- Slow down and be especially alert in residential neighborhoods. Children are excited on Halloween and may move in unpredictable ways.
- Take extra time to look for kids at intersections, on medians and on curbs.
- Enter and exit driveways and alleys slowly and carefully.
- Eliminate any distractions inside your car so you can concentrate on the road and your surroundings.
- Drive slowly, anticipate heavy pedestrian traffic and turn your headlights on earlier in the day to spot children from greater distances.
- Popular trick-or-treating hours are 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. so be especially alert for kids during those hours.

For more tips on how to help kids trick-or-treat safely on Halloween, visit [www.safekidskansas.org](http://www.safekidskansas.org) and [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org).

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### **About Safe Kids Kansas**

Safe Kids Kansas works to prevent childhood injury, the leading cause of death and disability to children. Safe Kids Kansas is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing injuries in children. Coalition members include over 70 statewide organizations, agencies and businesses and a network of local coalitions across the state.

Visit us at [www.safekidskansas.org](http://www.safekidskansas.org) and on Facebook.

This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request. For more information about obtaining an alternative format, you may contact Safe Kids Kansas at 785-296-1223, or [csage@kdheks.gov](mailto:csage@kdheks.gov). Both speech/hearing disabled and hearing Kansans can access the Kansas Relay Center by calling toll-free 1-800-766-3777. Callers should inform the relay operator of the number they wish to call and the type of call they are making direct, credit card, collect, person-to-person, etc.



[safekidskansas.org](http://safekidskansas.org)