

## **Trick-or-Treat Mini Safety Planner Sample Drop-In Article**

### **Keep Your Children Safe During The Halloween ‘Witching Hours’**

The end of daylight-saving time on October 30 this year allows just a single day for motorists to become adjusted to the time change before the Halloween holiday. In fact, studies have shown a clear relationship between an increase in fatigue, traffic crashes and the loss of an hour of sleep.

So motorists need to slow down and be especially vigilant while driving this Halloween and refrain from distracting activities, such as cell phone use. And parents or caregivers should supervise little boys and “ghouls” as they make their annual Halloween trick-or-treating rounds.

Why? On average a pedestrian is killed in a traffic crash every 113 minutes in this country, but the late afternoon and early evening are the “witching hours” for child pedestrians. More children are killed as pedestrians in traffic crashes between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. than any other time of day.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 40 percent of all child pedestrian fatalities occur during the late afternoon or early evening. The end of daylight-saving time on October 30 this year will only serve to compound the risk because many children will be treat-or-treating during low-light or nighttime conditions, making it more difficult for drivers to see them.

**[Organization]** urges all parents and caregivers to make sure they accompany trick-or-treaters as they make their way around neighborhoods. Hold their hands when they cross the street, and make sure their costumes are brightly colored and visible to motorists. Encourage children to carry flashlights or “glow sticks” to help them see and be seen.

Parents can reduce the risk of children suffering a traffic-related injury while trick-or-treating by following these safety tips and ensuring their children do the same.

#### **Halloween Safety Tips for Trick-or-Treaters**

- ❖ Carry a flashlight while walking to be as visible as possible at night and in low-light conditions. Visibility is an extremely important factor for pedestrians who should always assume that drivers cannot see them, especially at night.
- ❖ Use other kinds of light sources in addition to a flashlight, such as a flashing LED light.
- ❖ Wear retro-reflective materials. These materials are often found on athletic shoes or gear. Retro-reflective materials that outline the human form provide an even stronger visual cue to drivers that a pedestrian is in front of them, and that they should slow down and proceed more cautiously.
- ❖ Always stop and look left, right, left before entering the street.
- ❖ Don’t assume it is safe to cross in marked crosswalks if there isn’t a stop sign or traffic light. Make eye contact with the driver and make sure the vehicle has stopped moving before advancing into the intersection.
- ❖ There’s “traffic safety in numbers.” Whether walking with parents or friends, encourage children to trick-or-treat in groups.
- ❖ Children under 10 years old should not cross streets alone. They should trick-or-treat with parents or older youth.

- more -

- ❖ Costumes are part-and-parcel of Halloween, but when trick-or-treating avoid wearing masks or other items that could impede vision.
- ❖ Trick-or-treat on streets with sidewalks if possible. If sidewalks are not available, walk **against** traffic. This allows pedestrians to take evasive action sooner if they think an oncoming vehicle is getting too close.
- ❖ Carry a cell phone for emergency situations.

For more information on pedestrian safety, **[Organization]** recommends that parents go to [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov). From the home page menu click on “Traffic Safety,” then select “Pedestrians” from the links on the left-hand side of the screen.

###