

**Trick-or-Treat Mini Safety Planner
Sample News Release**

Note: Before filling in the names of the Organization and Organization Spokesperson, you MUST contact that person and receive permission to use his/her name in this press release, and you must get approval for the language of the quotations, and any changes or additions that person may require. Only after this is done can you send out the press release.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Date]

CONTACT: [Name, phone number, e-mail address]

**Daylight-Saving Time Ends October 30
[ORGANIZATION] Issues Halloween Safety Alert**

Daylight-saving time ends October 30 this year, giving pedestrians and motorists just one day to adjust to the time change (move clocks back one hour) before the Halloween holiday. As a result, **[Organization]** is calling on motorists and parents to take extra care to ensure children remain safe while trick-or-treating this Halloween.

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.

As it stands, an average of one pedestrian is killed in a traffic crash every 113 minutes in this country, with the hours between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. being the most dangerous time for child pedestrians. Dubbed the “witching hours” by child safety advocates, this is also the time of day most children will be outside trick-or-treating on Halloween. According to the National Traffic Safety Administration, 40 percent of all child pedestrian fatalities occur in the late afternoon or early evening.

“I urge parents and caregivers to make sure that they accompany trick-or-treaters as they make their way around neighborhoods,” said **[Organization Spokesperson, name and title]**. “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.”

While Congress recently passed legislation that will move the end of daylight-saving time to the first week of November in 2007, this will not eliminate the ongoing problem of child pedestrian fatalities. Parents ultimately need to teach their children basic traffic safety and properly supervise them on Halloween and throughout the year. **[Organization]** encourages parents to follow the Halloween traffic safety tips outlined here and ensure their children do the same.

Safety Tips for Trick-or-Treating

- ❖ 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 that 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.
- ❖ 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 rules and data, visit 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.

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