



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWS

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Halloween Safety Tips

Halloween is an exciting time of the year and a particularly special treat for children. However, Halloween can be very stressful, as some people may play mean tricks and provide tainted treats. Parents and children should be alert to unnecessary hazards. Concerns about child security can ruin the joy of Halloween. The following crime prevention tips can help make Halloween safe and more enjoyable for everyone.

Parents of trick-or-treating kids can get so caught up in the fun themselves that they might forget some simple safety ideas that could keep everyone out of trouble. Having a fun and safe Halloween will make it all worthwhile. Kids love Halloween. They get to dress up and get free candy. What a perfect holiday! Give your kids some precious Halloween memories that they'll have for life.

If you take your kids to a sponsored event, like a safe Halloween thrown by your church, community center or shopping mall, make sure to keep an eye on them at all times. Even though it seems less dangerous, you are still in a strange environment full of people that you don't know. All it takes is a minute with your back turned to find your child gone.

Cell phones are everywhere now. Everyone seems to have one, and they are so affordable. Make sure that your child has a pre-programmed cell phone if they go out on Halloween night. Ensure that all important telephone numbers are already there and ready for use.

As bad as it sounds, this is just a fact of life now. Get on the internet and check your local state website for sex offenders. Almost every state has one; just do a search for your state sex offender site. Look up your zip code and it should have a list of registered offenders in your area that includes street addresses. Make sure your kids stay away from those houses!

Know the route your kids will be taking if you aren't going with them. Let them know that they are to check in with you every hour, by phone or by stopping back at home. Make sure that they know not to deviate from the planned route so that you always know where they will be.

Unfortunately, trick or treating isn't what it used to be. It is never recommended to let kids walk the streets by themselves. Your best bet is to make sure that an adult is going with them. If you can't take them yourself, see if another parent or two can.



COSTUMES

Plan costumes that are bright and reflective, and all costumes should be made of flame retardant material. Props, such as toy guns, swords and knives should be made of soft rubber, Styrofoam, cardboard or other pliable material. Replica firearms that could be mistaken for real firearms should be avoided. If your child carries a jack-o'-lantern, a flashlight should be placed inside, not a candle. Children should use non-allergenic facial makeup instead of masks. Masks can restrict vision. If your child wears a mask, make sure he/she removes it when he/she crosses a street. Make sure that the eye holes are big enough to see not only in front but peripherally as well. You may have to cut them open further yourself. Older children might attend an adult-supervised Halloween party, instead of going out to trick or treat. Younger children may also enjoy attending an adult supervised Halloween party. Halloween is a time for ghosts and goblins and fun with your friends. Almost everyone is nice, but sometimes a few people play pranks on kids at Halloween. These tricks include putting dangerous things in candy and treats. Have your kids only eat homemade treats from people you know personally. Inspect all candy when they get home. Do not have them eat any candy that is not commercially wrapped.



TALK TO YOUR KIDS

Know what other activities a child may be attending, such as parties, school or mall functions. If they are going to be at a friend's home, get the phone number and make sure that you've met the parents.

Make sure you set a time that your kids should be home by. Make sure they know how important it is for them to be home on time or to call immediately if something happens and they are going to be delayed.

Kids will be kids. Explain to kids of all ages the difference between tricks and vandalism. Throwing eggs at a house may seem funny but they need to know the other side of the coin as well, that clean up and damages can ruin Halloween for everyone. If they are caught vandalizing, make them clean up the mess they've made.

KID SAFETY

Teach your kids about not getting into strangers cars or talking to strangers, no matter what the person says to them. Explain to them as simply as you can that some adults are bad and want to hurt children, that they should never go into a house that they don't know, get into a car or go anywhere with a stranger. Also, tell them what to do should this happen, to scream as loud as they can to draw attention and to run away as fast as they can to someplace safe.

Be sure to show your children how to cross a street properly. They should always look both ways before crossing the street and should only cross at corners or crosswalks. Make sure that if you have more than one child, they know to take the hand of the younger child when they cross a street.

PET SAFETY

It's Halloween night and the doorbell is continuously ringing. This may be very frightening to your dog or cat or other pets. You need to have a game plan for them, as well, on Halloween night. Have a room set up for them and keep them behind closed doors during trick-or-treating hours. Have food, water, a toy or two and a litter box if needed all set up for them.

You saw the cutest costume for your pet. Just because you think a certain Halloween costume for your fur person is cute doesn't mean that they will enjoy wearing it. Try it on them in advance and see how they react. If they don't like it, don't force them to wear it.

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North Reseda (North of Sherman Way) year to date crime numbers through the month of September show a 19.2% reduction overall in all Violent and Property Part-1 crimes, compared to last year's numbers. South Reseda (South of Sherman Way) had a 14.4% reduction year to date through September in all Violent and Property Part-1 crimes compared to last year's numbers. The crimes where there was an uptick was in Robbery (25% in North Reseda and 6.7% in South Reseda) and in Burglary (2% in North Reseda and 6.6% in South Reseda). Remember to be aware of your surroundings and if you see something, say something to prevent being a victim of crime. Also keep your neighborhood safer by getting to know your neighbors and agreeing to look out for each other. Your Senior Lead Officer can also give you advice on how to make your home a harder target for burglars.

Next Neighborhood Watch Meetings – October 10 and November 14 at 7: 00 p.m.

**Ann Kinzle Community Room located in the West Valley Community Police Station,
19020 Vanowen St., Reseda**

TARZANA:

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Tarzana's year to date crime numbers through the month of September show a 17.9% reduction overall in all Violent and Property Part-1 crimes, compared to last year's numbers. Currently, there is no uptick in any of the crime categories through September. Remember, to continue this downward trend in Tarzana's crime, **Lock It, Hide It, Keep It** to keep your property from being taken from your vehicle. Also keep your neighborhood safer by getting to know your neighbors and agreeing to look out for each other. Your Senior Lead Officer can also give you advice on how to make your home a harder target for burglars.

Contact Officer Scoggins for information on the next Tarzana Neighborhood Watch Meeting.



Don't Be A Victim of An Auto Related Property Crime!