



Trick-or-treaters always think that fun and candy are their No. 1 priorities on Halloween. Adults know that safety is their top concern. At Patten Title, we understand that both sides are right, so we're reminding you of the top safety tips to follow for both the Halloween crowd and homeowners providing the treats.

# Trick-or-Treating Tips

FOR FAMILIES AND HOMEOWNERS

## FOR TRICK-OR-TREATERS

### CARRY A FLASHLIGHT TO REMAIN VISIBLE

Make sure that someone in the trick-or-treater group — either a parent or a responsible child — has a flashlight to travel between houses and down the street. Children should wear bright reflective clothes or add reflective strips to their costumes. Families should stick together and add reflectors to a wagon or strollers.

### TRAVEL WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Safety is in numbers, which is why trick-or-treaters should always travel in groups. Include more than several adults if there are multiple families of kids heading into the neighborhood together. Keep an eye on excited youngsters who could get ahead of the crowd, and make sure each child has a "buddy" or sibling they can count on.

### STAY IN FAMILIAR NEIGHBORHOODS

Homeowners are often happy to give away candy and treats, but not if their property is destroyed in the process. Find a route that won't cut across yards or driveways, then remain on sidewalks to avoid getting lost or hurt between houses. It's important to stay in neighborhoods that you know and areas where you are familiar with the terrain. This is also essential

with younger kids because close neighbors are more likely to know who to call if little ones are separated from the group.

If you have to walk in the street, make sure you use the left side where you'll be facing the cars. According to the National Safety Council, [kids are twice as likely to be hit by a car](#) on Halloween night. It's a good night to find paths with sidewalks as often as possible.

### DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Late October weather can be unpredictable in Texas. Ensure anyone heading outside is dressed for the weather and that costumes fit appropriately. Also, check that everyone is wearing shoes or boots suitable for walking in the elements. It's easy to slip and fall on wet leaves or slick patios.

Since you won't know how your neighbors have decorated their porches for the holiday, make sure that costumes, wigs, and accessories are fire-resistant. It's best to avoid any type of open flames around costumes with gowns or capes that are hard to control.

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## MAP OUT YOUR ROUTE

Know which streets you plan to travel and what houses you plan to visit, then let someone at home know your route. Remember that homes participating in trick-or-treating will turn on a porch light. Then, ensure that each family within your group has someone with a cell phone should anyone be separated. Along your course, watch kids of all ages to make sure that everyone obeys traffic signs and avoids houses with unattended pets.

## LIST EMERGENCY CONTACTS

List your home address and a phone number on the costume of your child just in case they get separated from a large group. Talk to the kids before leaving your house about what to do if they lose sight of your party, and tell them to avoid strangers. If older kids are out without an adult, arrange a time and place to meet and ensure they have cell phones.

## PERFORM A CANDY CHECK

Kids will want to eat their candy while they're racing from house to house, but it's best to keep treats in their bags and buckets until everyone is home. Spread the goodies on the floor to make sure there are [no punctured packages](#) or mutilated pieces. The FDA also recommends that children avoid home-baked goods or anything not commercially wrapped.

Kids with allergies and intolerances should separate the candy they can eat from those they might want to avoid. Multiple charities (and dentist offices) accept [donations of unopened Halloween candy](#).

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## FOR HOMEOWNERS

Homeowners also have a stake in making Halloween a safe night for trick-or-treaters. These tips help ensure your house is ready for Halloween visitors.

### CREATE A SAFE PATH

Make sure the walkway to your front porch is well lit and free of clutter. Have your porch light on, and keep your pets guarded inside your house. This is also the time to secure your railings. If your porch is hard to walk on or will be too small for crowds, set up a candy station at the bottom of your stairs to keep younger kids safe.

Also, while candles are great for making jack-o'-lanterns look spooky, live candles can be a fire hazard around flowing costumes. Use battery-operated tea lights or a flashlight to illuminate your pumpkins.

### PLAN FOR SAFE TREATS

Every kid wants candy, but some kids have allergies. Consider offering three or four different options of candy or choose a non-food option like stickers or small toys. If you elect to pass out non-food choices, add a [teal pumpkin](#) to your porch decor so that families with food allergies know that your home has inclusive offerings.

### MONITOR THE CANDY BOWL

To avoid having your first trick-or-treaters be your only trick-or-treaters, make sure not to leave the candy bowl alone. Unattended candy is also an invitation for bad actors to play tricks on your treats. If you aren't available on Halloween night or don't want to get in the spirit of handing out candy personally, it's best to skip it. Many homeowners signal that their house is off-limits by switching off their porch lights.

*Stay safe!*