

15. Halloween fire safety

Halloween safety for little ghouls

Keep your trick-or-treaters safe while they have fun

Halloween is a whirlwind of fun for little ones and parents alike, with elaborate costumes, spooky decorations, and thoughts of fun-sized candy treasure around every corner. It's not surprising that in the rush to embrace the spirit of Halloween, sometimes safety isn't on the radar. With that in mind, the Office of the Fire Commissioner has the following quick safety tips to help reduce the risk of an accident spoiling your night of fun.

Costumes

When choosing a costume, avoid billowing or long trailing fabric. If you're making your own costume, choose material that won't easily ignite if it comes into contact with heat or a flame. If you're going as a sheet-with-eye-holes ghost, make sure you're not trailing excess fabric. "Not only is there a fire risk if you brush up against a heat source," says Acting Fire Commissioner Kevan Jess, "but there's a good chance you could trip over your own costume, or that someone else near you could step on it, causing you to fall."

If your child is wearing a mask, make sure the eye holes are large enough to see out of. Kids should be able to see in front of them, but also to the path below them in case of any poorly lit steps or other unexpected obstacles. "Makeup is always better than a mask. Nothing ruins a night of trick-or-treating like a trip to the hospital emergency room," says Jess.

Decorations

Despite the allure of tradition, you're better off using a flashlight or battery-operated candle in your jack-o-lantern instead of a candle with an open flame. If you do opt for a real candle, use extreme caution. The floor of the inside of a carved pumpkin is often uneven, so any candle you use should be stable inside, with a wide base and not much height. "Make sure you put lit pumpkins well away from anything that can burn, and out of the way of trick-or-treaters, doorsteps, walkways and yards," says Jess. You should also regularly check in with the pumpkin to ensure the candle is still safe inside and that it hasn't tipped over.

As nice as it is to have a well-decorated entryway at your home, make sure the walkway is clear and that there's nothing to trip over. Kids are thinking about candy and moving quickly from house to house, so they may not be giving their full attention to their surroundings. You may have been up and down your own front steps many times, but most of your visitors may not be familiar with the route to your door. Add dim lighting, excitement and awkward costumes to the mix, and the chances of tripping or getting snagged on something increase considerably.

Open Flames

While it's hard to deny the spooky factor of decorating with candles, it's best to keep candles safely confined to tables at adult Halloween parties. With excited, sugar-filled kids bouncing around and hopping from yard to yard in search of chocolate, it's far too easy for outdoor candles to be either knocked over or to come in contact with someone's costume. There are lots

of neat candle alternatives on the market such as coloured flashlights and battery operated candles that glow an eerie orange.