



## **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS**

**GREAT FALLS, Montana** – Halloween is just around the corner, and there will be more children out after dark than normal this weekend. Great Falls Fire Rescue (GFFR), the Great Falls Police Department and Great Falls Public Schools are reminding all of us to help keep our children safe this Halloween. Drivers are asked to be mindful and cautious as children will be trick-or-treating on Saturday. Here are some safety tips and reminders to help ensure that everyone has a howling good time.

Sergeant Jim Wells is reminding residents, “On Saturday there will be a large number of children out on our City streets after dark. As always drivers should not be texting or talking on their cell phones. Children can be unpredictable and may dart out into the roadways. We are asking drivers to be alert and to slow down when driving in residential areas.”

“Parents should always make sure that their child’s costume is flame-resistant and made of a material that won’t ignite easily if it comes into contact with heat or an open flame,” explains Great Falls Fire Marshal Dirk Johnson. He added, “Halloween decorations should always be kept away from heat sources and open flames, and it is safest to use a glow stick or battery-operated candle in jack-o-lanterns to avoid possible house fires. Make sure the exits in your home are clear of decorations so nothing blocks an escape route out of the home in an emergency, and ensure your smoke detector is in working order.”

Halloween can be an exciting time for children and parents alike, but it’s important to also keep safety in mind while out trick-or-treating.

***Be Alert, Walk Safely*** – Remember to cross the street at corners; use traffic signals and crosswalks. Put down all electronic devices, and pay attention while you are walking. Always walk; don’t run. Walk on sidewalks or paths, if there is not a sidewalk, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible. Do not dart out into the street between parked cars.

***Trick or Treating*** – Don’t let children go trick-or-treating alone. Children under the age of 12 should not be out alone at night without adult supervision. Trick-or-treat in your neighborhood and at residences you’re familiar with. Children should be reminded to not enter a home to receive a treat and to not accept treats from people in cars. Children should know their home or parents cell phone number in case they are separated and how to dial 911 in case of an emergency. Teach children to say “NO!” in a loud voice if someone tries to get them to go somewhere, accept anything other than a treat, or leave with them.

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***Be Visible*** – Decorate costumes and bags with reflective tape and stickers. Remember to wear light colors and use face paint and makeup instead of masks which can obstruct vision. Use glow sticks and flashlights to help be seen by drivers.

***Drive Safely*** – Drive slow, and be alert in residential neighborhoods on Halloween. Children may be excited and dart in and out of the roadways. Try to eliminate distractions in your car, so you can focus on driving – NO TEXTING or TALKING ON THE PHONE. Prime trick-or-treating time is 5:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

***Check Candy*** – After trick-or-treating check your child's treats to make sure they are sealed in wrappers. Throw out any candy with torn packages or holes or homemade treats that haven't been made by someone you know.

***Your Home*** – Make sure trick-or-treaters are safe when visiting your home too. Remove anything that could cause kids to trip or fall on your walkway or lawn; keep outside lights on; and keep family pets away from trick-or-treaters.

The City of Great Falls and Great Falls Public Schools wants everyone to have a spooktacular Halloween! For more Halloween safety tips contact the City of Great Falls at 455-8450 or the Great Falls Public Schools District Office at 268-6001.

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*Safety tips adapted from the National Fire Protection Association and Safe Kids Worldwide.*