



# Halloween Safety Tips

**Call 911 in case of fire.**

BC's professional fire fighters urge everyone to have a safe, happy Halloween. Halloween fireworks can cause injuries serious enough to require emergency room treatment if they are used improperly. Severe injuries caused by fireworks can include burns, lacerations, amputations, and blindness. Children from age 5 to 14 are most frequently involved in fireworks-related injuries.

Please follow these Halloween safety tips for fireworks and other activities:

## **FAMILY OR CONSUMER FIREWORKS**

- Check with your local Fire or Police Department for by-laws and regulations on discharging fireworks in your municipality. Be aware many municipalities have changed their by-laws concerning rules and regulations regarding fireworks.
- Adults must take responsibility to supervise all fireworks activities. Fireworks are not toys. They burn at approximately the same temperature as a household match and can cause burn injuries and ignite clothing if improperly lit.
- Read and follow all warnings and instructions. Do not purchase or use unlabeled fireworks. Homemade fireworks are deadly. One third of the injuries associated with fireworks have typically been caused by illegal explosives or homemade fireworks.
- It is illegal for minors to purchase and possess fireworks. It is illegal to sell fireworks to minors.
- Use fireworks outdoors only. Never try to re-light fireworks that have not fully functioned and always have water handy in a garden hose or bucket.
- Sparklers are often considered harmless fun. However, they can burn as hot as 650° Celsius (1200 °Fahrenheit) and can ignite clothing. As with other fireworks, always use them outdoors under adult supervision. Place used sparklers immediately into a metal container.
- The majority of the injuries from family or consumer fireworks involve misuse rather than malfunction.

## **DISPLAY FIREWORKS**

- Organizers need a permit to set off display fireworks. The actual firing of the display is conducted by a trained pyrotechnic operator and crew. Crowd control is mandatory.
- Spectators should obey all safety personnel and respect the security barriers set up to allow the trained operator to safely do his job.

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Each year almost 700 children and adults from around B.C. are admitted to the Burn, Trauma and Plastics Units at Vancouver General Hospital and BC Children's Hospital suffering serious trauma.

The BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn Fund provides life saving, life supporting, and life enriching services to them, and works to save all British Columbians from a similar trauma.

463-4800 Kingsway - Burnaby, BC - Canada V5H 4J2 - (604) 436-5617 - [info@burnfund.org](mailto:info@burnfund.org)

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- If a firework component falls to the ground without exploding, immediately tell the safety personnel. Do not touch the fireworks.
- Leave the lighting of all fireworks to the trained operator when you attend a public display. Consumer fireworks are not appropriate to use when a large crowd is present.
- Taking pets to a fireworks display is not a good idea. The loud noises can hurt their ears and cause them to panic. Leave pets at home if you are going to a fireworks show.
- Regulation alone cannot protect the public. It must be combined with personal responsibility and awareness.

## TRICK OR TREATING AND COSTUME SAFETY

- Buy flame resistant costumes, wigs and accessories. The best costumes are bright and reflective. Keep costumes short enough to prevent tripping. Consider adding reflective tape or striping for greater visibility.
- Give every child a flashlight with fresh batteries. Remind children of traffic safety rules, and that they should cross streets at corners, and to never cross between parked cars.
- Make sure that children know how to call 9-1-1 or their local emergency number if they experience an emergency or become lost. 9-1-1 can be dialed free from any pay phone.
- Secure emergency information (name, address, telephone number) within a child's Halloween attire.
- Give older children coins for non-emergency calls.
- Teach children to STOP, DROP and ROLL should their clothing catch fire: STOP immediately. DROP to the ground and cover face, unless hands are on fire. ROLL over and over until the flames are extinguished.

## SAFETY TIPS FOR ADULTS

- Be extra careful when driving. Excited children can forget safety rules. Make sure to appoint a designated driver if you are attending adult Halloween parties.
- Accompany children when they go out trick or treating. Explain to children the difference between tricks and vandalism.
- Community centres, shopping malls and houses of worship may hold organized Halloween events. As an alternative, start one in your neighbourhood.

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## SAFETY AT HOME

- Consider using only battery powered lanterns or chemical light sticks instead of candles in decorations. If not using battery powered lanterns then votive candles are the safest for pumpkins.
- Keep candles, matches and lighters away from the reach of children. Place lighted pumpkins on sturdy tables, away from curtains and other flammable objects. Never leave them unattended.
- When decorating your home, ensure that electrical outlets are not overloaded with holiday lighting or special effects. Keep exit doors unblocked. Replace bulbs on outdoor lights. Check the batteries in your smoke alarms. Test monthly; replace annually.
- Eliminate tripping hazards on your porch and walkways. Check for flower pots, low tree limbs, support wires or garden hoses that may prove hazardous for young children as they rush from house to house.

## PET SAFETY

- Make pets safe by keeping them away from the door and visiting trick or treaters, and do not let them outside. Ensure that they are wearing collars and proper I.D. tags. Talk to a veterinarian for advice more specific to individual pets.
- Remember that chocolate is deadly for pets. So are plastic and foil candy wrappers. Give pets an extra biscuit, not Halloween candy.
- Dog's tails can be lethal weapons. Keep dogs and cats away from Jack-O-Lanterns or lighted candles; they could knock them over and start a fire or receive serious burns.
- If holding an indoor Halloween party, place pets in a room, well away from the party. Leave them with food and water. Check on them once in a while, to let them know everything is fine.

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