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Avoid Real-Life Horrors This Halloween

Pedestrian and driving tips for a spook-tacular Halloween

Sacramento, CA – Halloween is the celebration of all things scary. For children, this means dressing up as their favorite characters and enjoying tricks and treats. For adults, the celebration often involves alcohol. Unfortunately, Halloween is also known for having the highest number of child-pedestrian deaths all year and ranks among the worst for holiday-related DUI crashes and deaths. The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) and California Highway Patrol (CHP) are providing tips to trick-or-treaters, parents, and partygoers to keep everyone safe this Halloween.

“Halloween should be a time of fun for kids and adults alike,” said OTS Director Rhonda Craft. “Some planning ahead, plus extra caution that night, can keep everyone safe on our streets this year.”

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, on Halloween night between 2009 and 2013, 119 people were killed by drunk driving, and 43 percent of all motor vehicle deaths involved drunk driving. The number of deaths among pedestrians ages 5 to 14 is four times higher between 4 and 10 p.m. on Halloween than on any other evening of the year. In 2013, 26 percent of all pedestrian fatalities on Halloween night involved a drunk driver.

“With an increase in the number of children and adults out on Halloween, motorists play a critical role in helping to keep them safe,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “As a driver, it is important to abide by the rules of the road and remain alert, sober, and free from distraction.”

Trick-or-treaters are often too excited and forget about safety, so motorists and parents must be even more aware. Keep these helpful tips in mind when out and about:

- Plan your route ahead of time on well-lit streets. Avoid busy streets.
- Choose a costume that makes it easy to walk, see and be seen. Light color costumes are best.
- Select costumes, masks, wigs, or beards made of flame-retardant materials (check the labels). Avoid flimsy, lightweight fabrics and costumes with billowing skirts or loose baggy sleeves.
- A mask may keep kids from seeing well, so make sure they take it off before crossing the street. Consider using makeup instead of a mask for added safety.
- It is best to trick-or-treat when it is still light outside, but carry a flashlight so trick-or-treaters can see and drivers can see them.
- Use retro-reflective tape on costumes. Be creative in applying it to make it fun to be seen.

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Adults often party on Halloween night, which can lead to drunk and drugged driving, and even dangers fueled by costumes and the excitement of the night. Motorists, partygoers, and hosts should keep these tips in mind:

- Avoid driving through residential areas where trick-or-treaters are likely to be present.
- This is a night to slow down, be extra cautious, and obey all traffic signs and signals. The risk of killing a pedestrian increases with just small increases in speed. A pedestrian is nearly twice as likely to be killed if hit by a car going 30 mph compared to 25 mph.
- Watch for children walking on roadways, medians, and curbs, and in dark costumes – they will be harder to see at night. Also, be aware that trick-or-treaters may not be paying attention to traffic and may run out mid-block or between parked cars. Motorists should scan far ahead when driving in residential areas, watch for children and cautiously monitor their actions. Turn on your headlights to make yourself more visible – even in daylight.
- Plan ahead if you will be drinking. Designate a sober driver. If you are already out and have had too much to drink, call a taxi, friend, or family member to drive you home.
- Party hosts should have plenty of food on hand for everyone throughout the evening and several non-alcoholic drink choices for the designated drivers. Do not allow anyone to leave if you have any doubts about their ability to drive.
- If you are going out on the town, be sure to download the DDVIP mobile app to locate bars, clubs, and restaurants near you that offer free non-alcoholic beverages and additional perks for designated drivers. The free app is available in both iTunes and Google Play stores.

The California Office of Traffic Safety and the California Highway Patrol want you to have a fun and safe Halloween. To keep up with the latest traffic safety information, be sure to follow us on Twitter at [@OTS_CA](https://twitter.com/OTS_CA) and [@CHP_HQ](https://twitter.com/CHP_HQ) or “Like” us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS or www.facebook.com/chp. For more information on all OTS efforts, visit www.OTS.ca.gov.

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