



NEWS

CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

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Impaired Driving – Neither a Trick nor a Treat

Sacramento, CA – Halloween is meant to be a time of spooky fun for both children and adults but unfortunately, monsters and ghosts aside, it can be one of the scariest days of the year for trick-or-treaters and motorists. Halloween has the unfortunate distinction as the day with 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) is providing important tips and prevention education to ensure a fun and safe Halloween for everyone.

“OTS is strongly encouraging partygoers, parents and children to stay alert and safe this Halloween,” said Chris Cochran, Assistant Director of the Office of Traffic Safety. “If people aren’t responsible while out trick-or-treating or celebrating, it could turn into a real-life scary story.”

“Watch for children and adults walking on roadways, medians and in dark costumes – they’ll be harder to see at night,” said Cochran. “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 people and cautiously monitor their actions.”

In California, Halloween pedestrian deaths are double the average, with more than half involving alcohol or drugs. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 2011, 44 percent of all highway fatalities nationwide during the Halloween period involved a driver with a blood alcohol concentration at or above the legal limit of .08 percent. This Halloween, motorists, partygoers and hosts should take the following tips into consideration when planning their celebrations:

- Designate a sober driver or a sober friend to drive you home. Also, save the number of a cab company in your phone before heading out for the night
- Avoid driving through residential areas where trick-or-treaters are likely to be present
- Turn on your headlights to make yourself more visible – even in daylight

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- Obey all traffic signs, signals and laws. The risk of killing a pedestrian increases even with just a small increase in speed. A pedestrian is nearly twice as likely to be killed when hit by a car going 30 mph compared to one traveling at 25 mph
- Party hosts should have plenty of food on hand to avoid having to leave once the party has started and guests have begun drinking. Hosts should offer non-alcoholic drink choices for their guests and designated drivers. Never allow a guest to leave your party drunk to drive anywhere.

Parents need to take an active role on Halloween:

- Plan the route ahead of time, try and aim for well-lit streets, avoid high traffic areas and busy streets
- Choose costumes that make it easy for your kids to walk and be seen by drivers - light colored costumes are the best choice
- For darker-colored costumes, use retro-reflective tape to help make your child well-seen by drivers. Be creative in applying the tape to make it fun and easy to be seen
- Masks can sometimes obstruct a child's path of vision, so make sure that when crossing the street they remove it or consider using makeup instead of a mask for added safety
- It's best to trick-or-treat when it's still light outside, but if you find yourselves out after dark carry a flashlight so that trick-or-treaters can see and so that drivers can see them
- Don't run! Always walk and make sure the kids do too
- Cross only at corners and never cross between parked cars or in the middle of a block
- Wait until you get home to sort, check and eat treats. Even if you're not behind the wheel, it is still important to remember to remain alert when near roads and busy areas
- Remember, even if you see a car, they may not be able to see you or your child until it's too late

Making smart choices this Halloween will help ensure that everyone's holiday ends well. Recipes for non-alcoholic designated driver drinks, or "DDrinks," are available at the OTS Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS. For more information on all OTS efforts, visit www.ots.ca.gov.

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