



## **Farm Bureau Insurance Safety Alert: Have a Safe Halloween**

*Virginia Farm Bureau Insurance provides the public with important information and tips throughout the year to aid in safety and health. This alert provides tips on Halloween safety.*

Richmond, VA, October 27, 2007 --(PR.com)-- There are few days in the year as exciting as Halloween. The thrill of children—and adults—decorating houses, carving pumpkins, obtaining sweets, and taking to the streets dressed as make-believe ghosts, witches, and goblins can be an incredibly invigorating experience. However, the dangers of Halloween are very real.

“With so much going on and everyone having such a good time, it is easy to forget to be careful and safe,” says Jimmy Maass, safety coordinator at Virginia Farm Bureau. “We know that pedestrian fatalities involving children are about 4.5 times the levels of other nights of the year, so we encourage parents and children to put safety first.”

Before Halloween comes, use these tips to help make your home and candy-gathering fun and safe:

- Choose a costume for your child that doesn't hang or drag, has eye holes big enough for good vision, and is fireproof. If your child has a prop (such as a sword), be sure its edges are dulled and it will collapse if fallen on.
- If you choose facial makeup as part of the costume, make sure it won't run into their eyes and irritate them, obstructing vision.
- If you decorate a jack-o-lantern and put it on your porch, be sure the carved creature is far enough from the door stoop to prevent accidentally setting a visitor's costume on fire. Even better, use a flashlight or purchase flickering lights that are battery-powered.
- If you are decorating your house and/or yard, make sure walkways are clear and you've taken proper precautions to safeguard all electrical props and wires from fire.
- Ensure all pets are properly restrained before trick-or-treaters arrive.
- If you involve your child with the carving, find a suitable activity for the child that doesn't involve cutting or carving with a knife.
- Review proper safety measures with your child, such as not talking to strangers and looking both ways before crossing the street.

While being prepared is always a safe approach to take for any situation, many of the dangers of Halloween come out when the children hit the streets to trick-or-treat. However, there are steps you can take to keep your children—and yourself—safe during the adventure.



- Send your child out to trick-or-treat while it is still daylight, or as close to dusk as possible.
- Plan a safe route and know where the hazards may be before you leave the house. Make sure your child is mature enough and responsible enough before going it alone.
- Use reflective tape and/or a light colored costume to ensure your child is easily visible.
- If your child is going out without parental supervision, establish a “be home by” time.
- Make sure children know to stay in populated, well-lit areas. Children should stop at familiar houses in their own neighborhood. They should travel in groups.
- Provide your child a flashlight, or carry one with you.
- Children should not eat any candy until they get home and a parent has had the chance to inspect the candy.

“Because of the dangers of this holiday, many people are having Halloween parties for children in the place of traditional trick-or-treating,” says Maass. “This is a great idea as it provides children a safe, fun place to celebrate while still dressing up, carving pumpkins, and getting candy.”

#### About Virginia Farm Bureau Insurance Services

Virginia Farm Bureau Insurance Services is committed to providing products that best meet the insurance needs of Virginia's families and small businesses. An organization with more than 148,000 members, served by more than 100 county offices throughout the Commonwealth, Farm Bureau Insurance also offers a wide range of financial planning products and services.

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