



SCOTT W. LINDQUIST, MD, MPH, DIRECTOR
345 6TH STREET, SUITE 300
BREMERTON, WA 98337-1866
(360) 337-5235

News Release

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CONTACT: Barbara Smithson
(360) 337-5250

Pedestrian Safety a Top Priority this Halloween

BREMERTON, WA --- On a night when children are out in force gathering up candy close to vehicular traffic, pedestrian safety should be a top priority for both drivers and parents. On average, twice as many kids are killed while walking on Halloween compared to other days of the year.

When it's dark outside, it's important for drivers to slow down and watch out for trick-or-treaters, especially around crosswalks. On Halloween, parents should also do their part to help kids stay out of the emergency room by emphasizing safe pedestrian behavior before the kids go out trick-or-treating.

"The simple act of slowing down on neighborhood roads will not only make the tricks and treats of Halloween more enjoyable for everyone, it could save lives," said Barbara Smithson, Injury Prevention Specialist for the Kitsap County Health District. "Children younger than age 12 should not be alone crossing streets at night without an adult. If older kids are mature enough to go trick-or-treating without adult supervision, parents should make sure they go in a group and stick to a predetermined route with good lighting."

Motorists are reminded to be extra careful this Halloween by:

- **Slowing down** in residential neighborhoods and school zones. Remember that popular trick-or-treating hours are during the typical rush-hour period of 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.
- **Being especially alert** and take extra time to look for kids at intersections, on medians and on curbs. Children are excited on Halloween and may move in unpredictable ways.
- **Slowly and carefully** enter and exit driveways and alleys.
- **Reducing distractions** inside your car, such as talking on the phone or eating, so you can concentrate on the road and your surroundings.

Kids and families should:

- **Cross the street safely at corners** using traffic signals and crosswalks. Look left, right and left again when crossing and keep looking as you cross. Walk, don't run, across the street.
- **Walk on sidewalks or paths.** If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible. Children should walk on direct routes with the fewest street crossings.
- **Slow down and stay alert.** Watch out for cars that are turning or backing up and never dart out into the street or cross in between parked cars.
- **Use costumes that are both fun and safe.** Decorate costumes and bags with reflective tape or stickers and, if possible, choose light colors. Masks can obstruct a child's vision, so instead choose non-toxic face paint and make-up whenever possible. Have kids carry glow sticks or flashlights in order to see better, as well as be seen by drivers.

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