

In about two and a half weeks, another Halloween will be upon us and along with this comes creative costumes, a fun parade, and of course, trick-or-treating. Children have always looked forward to this long-standing tradition and we at the Oneonta Police Department want to make sure that it is not only an enjoyable time, but a safe time as well for everyone. Therefore let's consider some things that we can all do to make sure that this year's Halloween turns out great.

Obviously costumes are the quintessential part of everyone's Halloween so parents; please make sure that the costumes selected for your children are safe as well as unique. The costumes should not obstruct breathing or vision, they should not impede mobility, and they should include some type of reflective component if worn at night. Making sure that your children can breathe, see, be seen, and move properly is even more important than how the costume looks.

As we all know, the second key ingredient for Halloween is trick-or-treating. With this in mind, drivers must pay extra close attention for eager trick-or-treaters who may dart out into the roadway. Traveling a bit slower and covering the brake while driving in the downtown and residential neighborhoods is extremely appreciated. It is recommended that children be escorted from house to house by a responsible adult. This will help ensure that children do not wander into traffic and that they only go to locations which are pre-approved. Additionally, parents or guardians should also be there to verify that children do not enter a stranger's home, even if invited to do so. Although the majority of society would not cause harm to a child, we live in a world where there are those who would. Taking extra precautions to make sure that this does not happen is always advisable.

From a safety point of view, it is also highly recommended that parents inspect all candy which their trick-or-treater receives before it is consumed. Any candy that is not properly sealed, or which is loose, or which looks to be tampered with in any way should be discarded. Again, it is important to take proper precautions to prevent victimization because as the old adage goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

As much as young children enjoy Halloween for the innocence of the day, we know that some young adults use the day as an excuse to commits acts of vandalism, disorderly conduct, or general public disruption. We at the Oneonta Police Department take this very seriously and take a zero tolerance position towards this type of behavior. If readers see individuals throwing eggs, damaging property, or engaging in any behavior that is disturbing or suspicious, I ask that you call us so that we can respond and investigate. Criminal-based and disorderly behavior is never acceptable, regardless of the day.

If you are hosting a Halloween party, please remember that noise travels so take that into account to prevent neighboring residents from being disturbed. If alcohol is served at such party, it must be verified that those drinking are at least 21 years of age. If you do consume alcohol, please do not drink and drive; there are taxis, buses, or other means of transportation available so that you do not put yourself or others at risk.

I hope that the topics listed in this column served as good reminders for everyone. We know that we all look forward to seeing the amusing ghost, goblin, and assortment of other imaginative costumes on display so as a community, let's all do our part to make sure that this Halloween is not only an entertaining day, but a safe day for all.