

Keep Halloween Spooky And Fire Free

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SPRINGFIELD - Halloween is a fun, spooky and exciting time for kids and adults as they scour for that perfect costume and people add spooky decorations to their homes. If you don't keep fire safety in mind, Halloween and fall decoration can add an increased fire danger to your home that could create a real scary situation.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), each year from 2017 to 2019, an estimated average of 9,200 fires were reported to fire departments in the United States over a 3-day period around Halloween.

These fires caused an estimated annual average of 25 deaths, 100 injuries, and \$117 million in property loss. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that decorations were the first thing to ignite in roughly 800 reported home fires each year. More than two of every five of these fires occurred because the decorations were too close to a heat source, such as a candle or hot equipment.

“Halloween is an exciting time for kids and talking to them about fire safety before heading out to search for all the yummy goodies is extremely important,” said Illinois State Fire Marshal James A. Rivera. “Explain and guide your trick-or-treaters away from any open flames in jack-o-lanterns and keep their costumes away from a heating source. Use glow sticks to add an even spookier feel to your jack-o-lanterns helping trick-or-treaters visiting your porch stay safe.”

Taking a few simple steps will help to create a spooky season that doesn't turn into a scary situation.

- Use a battery-operated candle or glow stick in jack-o-lanterns.
- When choosing costumes, avoid long trailing fabric.
- If your children are wearing a costume mask, make sure the eye holes are large enough so the child can see out.
- Teach children to stay away from open flames, including jack-o-lanterns with candles in them.
- Be sure children know how to stop, drop, and roll if their clothing catches fire.
- Dried flowers, cornstalks, and crepe paper catch fire easily. Keep all decorations away from open flames and other heat sources like light bulbs and heaters.
- Provide children with flashlights to carry for lighting or glow sticks as part of their costume.
- Remember to keep exits clear of decorations so nothing blocks escape routes.
- Make sure all smoke alarms are working.