



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Wednesday, Oct. 29, 2014

Contact: Fire Chief Sammy Negrón, 843-263-6843

Beaufort firefighters urge care and safety for trouble-free Halloween

No one wants to see a firefighter on Halloween, unless it's a pint-sized version dressed up in costume.

But the holiday is ripe for fire accidents, noted Beaufort Fire Chief Sammy Negrón. Each year, Halloween decorations help start more than 1,000 residential fires across the country. The goal in Beaufort and Port Royal, said Negrón, is to keep Halloween safe for everyone.

"It is easy to keep Halloween safe and still fun," he said. "We encourage people to think about fire safety for their children and their costumes, for their houses, and for children and parents going trick-or-treating."

Negrón shared these tips from the National Fire Protection Association:

- When choosing a costume, stay away from billowing or long trailing fabric. If your child is wearing a mask, make sure the eye holes are large enough so they can see out
- Provide children with flashlights to carry for lighting or glow sticks as part of their costume – and don't let them use lighted candles or lanterns
- Dried flowers, cornstalks and crepe paper are highly flammable. Keep these and other decorations well away from all open flames and heat sources, including light bulbs and heaters
- It is safest to use a flashlight or battery-operated candle in a jack-o-lantern. If you use a real candle, use extreme caution. Make sure children are watched at all times when candles are lit and never leave the candle unattended

- When lighting candles inside jack-o-lanterns, use long, fireplace-style matches or a utility lighter. Be sure to place lit pumpkins well away from anything that can burn and far enough out of way of trick-or-treaters, doorsteps, walkways and yards
- Remember to keep exits clear of decorations, so nothing blocks escape routes
- Tell children to stay away from open flames. Be sure they know how to stop, drop and roll if their clothing catches fire. Have them practice, stopping immediately, dropping to the ground, covering their face with hands, and rolling over and over to put out the flames
- **Use** flashlights as alternatives to candles or torch lights when decorating walkways and yards. They are much safer for trick-or-treaters, whose costumes may brush against the lighting
- If your children are going to Halloween parties at others' homes, have them look for ways out of the home and plan how they would get out in an emergency.

Regardless of the holiday or even a power outage, decorations are the first thing to ignite in 900 reported home fires nationwide each year. Two of every five of these fires were started by a candle – including candles inside the popular jack-o-lanterns.

Capt. John Robinson, fire prevention specialist with the Beaufort Fire Department, recommends keeping all combustibles at least three feet from any sources of heat. Don't overload electrical circuits with lights or howling goblins and never leave lit candles unattended, he said.

“On Halloween and also on Christmas, it's easy for parents to get distracted by all the excitement of the children. When that happens, the adults sometimes forget the basic fire safety rules – and that's how tragedies start.”

END