



OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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No Tricks, Just Safety Treats: Fire Safety Tips for Halloween

According to the NFPA from 2019-2023 there was an average of 832 home structure fires that began with decorations.

Springfield, Ill- As Halloween approaches, the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM) urges everyone to celebrate safely and keep fire hazards in mind while enjoying the season's festivities. Decorations, costumes, and candles all add to the fun, but they can also increase the risk of fire and injuries if not handled carefully.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) from 2019–2023 there was an average of 832 home structure fires that began with decorations per year. These fires caused an annual average of 3 civilian fire deaths, 28 civilian fire injuries, and \$17 million in direct property damage. Nearly half (47%) of these fires occurred because the decorations were too close to a heat source, such as a candle or hot equipment with approximately one-third (33%) of these fires were started by candles. The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) reports, 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.

"Simple safety steps can make a big difference in keeping your family and community safe this Halloween," **said Illinois State Fire Marshal Michele Pankow**. "By choosing safe decorations, adding reflective items to costumes materials that are flame resistant and using battery-operated candles instead of real flames, everyone can enjoy the night without accidents. Let's make this Halloween fun, festive, and fire 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.
- Motorists should slow down and use extreme caution while driving during trick-or-treat hours.

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