

NEWS RELEASE



Southern Platte Fire Protection District
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Better Safe Than Sorry This Halloween

Parkville, MO (October 29, 2009) Southern Platte Fire Protection District's personnel put extra effort into making the community safer each year. Instead of the recommended week long activities, by NFPA, the District along with all departments in the Heart of America Metro Fire Chiefs Council region believe in a full month of hard hitting education, in order to make residents safer.

Fire Chief Richard Carrizzo believes the extra work has paid off over the years. "Smoke detectors alert people in time in order for them to reach a safe location outside at the families' meeting point," stated Chief Carrizzo.

The Fire District has not stopped with just a full month of education, but has continued the effort all year on "all safety" aspects of life.

Hopefully, children, parents and motorists alike all pay attention to the need for everyone to work for safety on Halloween, the night that wraps up with one of the largest safety campaigns of the year, "Change your Clock, Change your Battery."

While Halloween is intended to be a fun holiday when everyone can enjoy having an active imagination, safety experts also warn it's a time when safety is important.

An important step in that direction, Chief Carrizzo noted, is for parents to accompany young children on trick-or-treat rounds and to pay attention to what children are wearing before they head out. It's also important to pay attention to what they do and where they go.

Before they leave home, parents need to make sure:

- Costumes are age-appropriate.

- Props that can cause smaller children to trip and fall are not used.
- Costumes and masks do not make it difficult for the child to see, move or breathe.

It's also a good idea to stay away from traditional dark clothing, because it makes children hard to see at night.

There are also Halloween dangers for those who stay home, according to information from the National Fire Protection Association.

Using candles greatly increases the chance of fire, so Southern Platte Fire encourages people to use flashlights to light pumpkins and for other spooky effects. Decorations for special events, most often involving candles, account for an annual average of 900 home fires, causing nearly \$6 million in direct property damage," according to the NFPA.

Across the nation, there is also a tragic side to Halloween and it must be addressed, according to the NFPA. "In the United States, more than 100 people die each year as a result of their clothing becoming ignited. Halloween can be a fun celebration, but children should be closely supervised and their costumes made with fire safety in mind."

According to Kansas State University Research and Extension safety information, there are some important steps that parents can follow to keep children safe while trick-or-treating.

They include:

- Make sure an adult or an older responsible youth will be supervising children under age 12.
- Plan and discuss the route trick-or-treaters intend to follow.
- Instruct children to travel only in familiar areas and along an established route.
- Teach children to stop only at well-lit homes and never to enter a stranger's house.
- Establish a return time.
- Tell youngsters not to eat any treat until they return home and have an adult inspect the treats.

- Review appropriate trick-or-treat safety precautions, including pedestrian/traffic safety rules.
- Pin a slip of paper with the child's name, address and phone number inside a pocket in case the youngster gets separated from the group.
- Give children an early meal before going out.
- Wash fruit and slice into small pieces before giving it to the child.
- When in doubt, throw it out.

The Southern Platte Fire Protection District's four stations provide fire suppression, inspections, emergency medical assistance, hazardous-materials response, and public education for more than 37,000 citizens in Platte County, MO. The Southern Platte Fire Protection District, which includes Parkville, Weatherby Lake, and Farley, is one of the fastest-growing areas in the Kansas City metropolitan area. In addition to serving its own District, the department provides automatic-aid assistance to the Kansas City Fire Department and Riverside Public Safety. Visit our website for more information: www.spfpd.com

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