

Many hallmarks of Halloween—lit jack-o-lanterns, candle decorations and billowing costumes—all pose fire safety hazards.

Overall, candles caused four percent of reported home fires, six percent of the home fire deaths, 10 percent of the home fire injuries, and seven percent of the direct property damage in reported home fires during this period.

Halloween is one of the top five days for candle fires.

NFPA statistics also show that, from 2003-2007, decorations were the item first ignited in an estimated annual average of 1,240 reported home structure fires, resulting in seven civilian deaths, 53 civilian injuries and \$20 million in direct property damage each year.

“We urge everyone to take simple precautions to keep this year’s Halloween celebrations festive and safe,” says Carli.

Fortunately, she notes, most fire hazards can be avoided with a few minor adjustments and a little extra planning. Below are NFPA’s tips for keeping the family, home and all trick-or-treaters safe from fire this Halloween:

- When choosing a costume, stay away from billowing or long trailing fabric. If making a costume, choose material that won’t easily ignite if it comes into contact with heat or flame. If children are wearing masks, make sure the eye holes are large enough so they can see. • Provide children with flashlights to carry for lighting or glow sticks as part of their costume.
- 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 candles in a jack-o-lantern. If using a real candle, use extreme caution. Make sure children are watched at all times when candles are lit. 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 trick-or-treaters, doorsteps, walkways and yards.
- If choosing to use candle decorations, make sure to keep them well attended at all times.
- 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 the flames out.)
- 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 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.
- Children should always go trick-or-treating with a responsible adult.
- Remind children to stay together as a group and walk from house to house.
- Review how to cross a street with children. Look left, right and left again to be sure no cars are approaching before crossing the street.

Make a rule that children will not eat any treat until it has been brought home and examined by

a grown-up.