



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Health Department Urges Safety During Halloween Celebrations

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) is urging the public to be aware of pedestrian safety as the Halloween season approaches. Pedestrians and motorists who will be celebrating, should practice safety precautions. Under Pennsylvania state law, motorists are required to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.

“Drivers should drive slowly, anticipate heavy pedestrian traffic and turn their headlights on earlier in the day to spot children from greater distances,” said Gwen Missouri, Coordinator of the Health Department’s Traffic Safety Education Project. “Popular trick-or-treat hours are from 5:30pm - 9:30pm, so drivers need to be especially alert for kids and eliminate any distractions inside your car so you can concentrate on the road and your surroundings.”

Here are some helpful tips that you can use:

- Encourage children to decorate their costumes and bags with reflective tape or stickers.
- Have kids can carry glow sticks or flash lights to help them see and to be seen by drivers.
- Select a costume for your child that is the correct size and length to prevent trips and falls.
- Avoid having children under the age of 12 be trick-or-treat alone at night without adult supervision. If kids are mature enough to be without supervision, make sure they know to stick to familiar well-lit areas in groups.
- Be alert and slow down when driving in residential neighborhoods, because children are excited on Halloween and may move in unpredictable ways.
- Remind children to enter and exit driveways and alleys slowly and carefully.

According to PennDOT data, last year in Allegheny County, there were 375 crashes involving pedestrians. The majority of these crashes were a result of aggressive and distracted driving behaviors. The law states that vehicles shall yield the right of way to pedestrians in a marked or unmarked crosswalk. If convicted of violating this law, the penalties include a \$50 fine and 2 points on your license. Motorists are encouraged to obey this law in order to prevent potentially devastating incidents and penalties from citations.

The Allegheny County Health Department Traffic Safety Education Project offers pedestrians safety education for all occasions within the “Road Rules” presentation which is available to elementary aged students in Allegheny, Beaver, and Lawrence Counties. To schedule a presentation, contact Nicole Barnett at 412-247-7962 or by visiting www.achd.net/injury.

For more information on Pennsylvania’s pedestrian safety laws, visit www.justdrivepa.org or www.achd.net/injury.

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