

## Trick or Traffic: Protecting Your Kids from the #1 Risk This Halloween | Oregon Personal Injury Attorneys

**Date:** October 27, 2009

Halloween is a time for scary stories, and it looks like it's the grownups getting spooked. Parents hear warnings about stranger danger, razor blades, and LSD in candy bags. There's even [a scientific study on eye injuries from throwing raw eggs](#). Some folks worry about black cats. But the real danger on Halloween night is one so ordinary it could go unnoticed: **cars**.

And in 2009, the danger from car-pedestrian accidents could be higher than ever, because the holiday falls on a Saturday.

According to the [University of Michigan News Service](#), children under 15 are 4.5 times more likely to die in a car crash on Halloween than on any other evening of the year, with most deaths occurring between 4 PM and 8 PM—prime trick-or-treating time.

Drunk drivers are a particular menace this time of year, again, for the grownups on Halloween. [Reuters](#) reports that 58% of all Halloween traffic fatalities in the U.S. in 2008 involved a driver with a blood-alcohol content of .08 or higher. These are the same drivers who will be on the road while your children trick-or-treat.

Fortunately, there are a few things you can (mostly) relax about. According to Lenore Skenazy in [Free-Range Kids: Giving Our Children the Freedom We Had Without Going Nuts with Worry](#), there has never been a single report of a child poisoned by Halloween candy given to them by a stranger. Also, sex crimes against preteen children are no higher during Halloween than at any other time of the year, according to [a study in Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment](#). Of course, every parent should be cautious, and it doesn't hurt to inspect the candy. But don't waste too much time on oddities; focus on the real dangers, like the risk of a car crash fatality that quadruples on Halloween.

It is vital to do everything possible to protect your kids from traffic dangers. Here are a few tips:

- Set a good example. If you host or attend a Halloween party, make sure no one drinks and drives. Designate a sober driver.
- Give your children a refresher course in “**Stop, Look, and Listen.**”
- When preparing costumes, consider using makeup instead of sight-obscuring masks.
- Have your kids carry flashlights, stay on the sidewalk, and walk in groups.
- Accompany your children, or set a safe route for older kids.
- When driving, use extra caution before and after the Halloween weekend, not just on October 31. Some children may trick-or-treat or have parties on a different day.
- **Do not** pass a car that stops in front of you. It may be dropping off children.
- **Never assume** a pedestrian will yield, especially a child.
- Watch for children in driveways and medians, stay off your cell phone, and drive well below the speed limit. **Rule of thumb:** pretend you're in a giant school zone.

Sure, it's fun to listen to scary stories – but it's not so pleasant to live through one. For children's sake, take safe driving seriously this Halloween! And help ensure everyone can enjoy the holiday.