

COVID-19 Guidance for a Safe Halloween

A safe Halloween during the COVID-19 pandemic may look and feel a little different this year as people decide how they will celebrate – whether it's having fun from a distance, trick-or-treating, enjoying Halloween at home or something in between. Sacramento County Public Health would like to share information on how to take part in this holiday in your own neighborhood that reduces the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Background

COVID-19, also known as the novel coronavirus, is a respiratory illness that is spread through the air via respiratory droplets from an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces. The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms.

It is thought that the virus may also spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose, mouth or eyes, causing infection. Therefore, personal prevention practices (such as [handwashing](#), [staying home when sick](#), [maintaining 6 feet of distance](#), and [wearing a face covering](#)) and environmental prevention practices (such as [cleaning and disinfecting](#)) are important ways to prevent the virus' spread.

Requirements may change. Please visit [EMD.SacCounty.net](https://www.emd.sacounty.net) regularly for updates.

This year, it is important to stay in your own neighborhood to celebrate Halloween.

Do not travel to other neighborhoods to trick-or-treat.

Be Ready for Trick or Treaters:

When passing out candy, consider a plan for social distancing:

- Wash hands before and after handling candy.
- Do not pass candy out from inside of your home; give out candy from the porch or drive way instead of from the front door
- Wear a face covering
- Only give commercially packaged candy
- Place a table between the person handing out candy and the trick or treaters to help maintain 6 feet social distance
- Make a variety of treat bags with commercially packaged candy and hang from streamers in the yard
- Place a bowl or container of candy at the end of the driveway or walkway with some hand sanitizer and watch from the porch
- Use a candy grabber or tongs to hand out candy or place on a table to be picked up.

Safety Practices

All of the guidelines for day-to-day prevention of the spread of COVID-19 are still in effect.

- Wear a [face covering correctly](#); even while outdoors
 - Allow your child to select their own face covering
 - Decorate a face covering together to match your child's costume
 - Ensure the wearer can still see out of the costume and there are no vision or trip hazards
 - Don't wear a costume that prohibits you from wearing a face covering
- Maintain 6 feet social distance from others and from different households
 - Travel together with your household members as a small group
 - Maintain interactions with others brief
- Practice good hygiene
 - Wash hands often
 - Have hand sanitizer available and use often
 - Don't touch your face
 - Don't share costume props such as swords, fake firearms, etc.
 - Don't share food
- If you are sick, have been in contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19 stay home and away from others
 - Symptoms include: cough, difficulty breathing, fever, etc.
 - Clean and disinfect high touch contact surfaces, refer to [List N: Disinfectant for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\)](#).
- Follow general trick-or-treating safety measures:
 - Adults should accompany children
 - Establish ground rules with children before trick-or-treating
 - Limit the number of houses you visit and consider sticking to houses you know
 - Ask your child to pick one candy and stick with it. Don't touch multiple candies.
 - Wait until arriving at home so that hands can be washed before eating candy
 - Have an adult inspect the candy before eating
 - Only eat candy in original wrapper
 - Bring a flashlight
 - Wear light-colored clothing and consider adding reflective tape
 - Watch out for traffic
 - Keep costumed children away from pets, as pets might not recognize the child and become frightened

Events and Gatherings

[The State of California](#) defines gatherings as meetings or other events that bring together persons from multiple households at the same time for a shared or group experience in a single room, space, or place such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large conference room, meeting hall, or other indoor or outdoor space.

The *more people* an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and COVID-19 spreading.

- Private gatherings should be limited to no more than **3 households**. The smaller the number of people, the safer.
- Keep the households that you interact with stable over time. Spend time with the same people thereby reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Participating in multiple gatherings with different households or groups is strongly discouraged.
- Recommend the host collects the names and contact information for all attendees in case contact tracing is needed later.
- If possible, plan the gathering outside with plenty of air flow. Provide enough room for attendees to maintain physical distancing of six feet at all times.
- Attendees should wash hands often and wear a [face covering](#), exemptions may apply.
- Plan for the event or gathering to last less than two hours.
- Singing, chanting, shouting, and physical exertion significantly increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission because these activities increase the release of respiratory droplets and fine aerosols into the air. Because of this, singing, chanting, and shouting are strongly discouraged, but if they do occur, follow these recommendations:
 - All people who are singing or chanting should wear a face covering at all times while singing or chanting, including anyone who is leading a song or chant.
 - People who are singing, shouting, chanting, or exercising are strongly encouraged to maintain physical distancing beyond 6 feet to further reduce risk.
 - People who are singing or chanting are strongly encouraged to do so quietly (at or below the volume of a normal speaking voice).
 - Musicians should maintain at least 6-foot physical distancing and should be from one the three households. Playing of wind instruments (any instrument played by the mouth, such as a trumpet or clarinet) is strongly discouraged.

Refer to the [CDPH Guidelines for Events and Gatherings](#) for additional information.

Indoor Alternatives to Trick-or-Treating

Celebrate creatively this year!

- A Halloween watch party at home
 - Watch parties can use online video and chat options so attendees can interact with each other
- Halloween movie night at drive in theaters
 - Must comply with [Family Entertainment State Guidelines](#)
- Virtual costume party
 - Best costume contest
 - Make your own costume contest
- Virtual craft projects and contests
 - Pumpkin carving
 - Painting
 - mask decorating contests
 - Home decorating contest
- Consider a candy scavenger hunt in the house or yard

Outdoor Alternatives to Trick-or-Treating

- Reverse trick-or-treat
 - Drop small gift bags of commercially packaged candy on your neighbor's porch instead
- Trunk or treat
 - Follow the Safety Practices listed above
 - Park cars at least 8 to 10 feet apart from each other
 - If lines form, maintain participants at least 6 feet apart
- Plan a contact free neighborhood-wide scavenger hunt which may include candy, decorations and photo opportunities
- Car parades that comply with [Drive-In Event Guidance](#) including:
 - Drive by events or contests where individuals dress up or decorate their vehicles and drive by judges that are appropriately physically distanced
 - Drive through events where individuals remain in their vehicles and drive through an area with Halloween displays
 - Drive through event where individuals can receive a treat bag (limited to commercially packaged treats) or take away item from an organizer while the participants remain in their vehicle
 - Children can stay in their yards in costume and neighbors will drive by and gently toss candy out of the windows as they pass by.
- Plan a social distanced costume parade.
 - Place treats where kids can pick them up along the parade route (daytime activity). Alternatively, provide a bag of treats at the end of the parade.

Safer Alternatives for Dia do los Muertos

- Spend time with people of the same household or to celebrate virtually.
- Consider placing and creating the altar in a front window or outside so others can view from a safe social distance.
- Create a virtual space to honor lost loved ones. Share with family and friends via email or social media.
- If planning to visit the cemetery, consider visiting only with people of the same household. Wear a face covering, maintain social distancing and limit time spent to minimum necessary.

Resources

[Statewide Industry Guidance](#)

[Center for Disease Control: Events and Gatherings](#)

[Sacramento County COVID-19 Updates](#)

[CDPH Guidance for Safer Halloween and Día de los Muertos Celebrations during COVID-19](#)

[CDPH Guidance for Private Gatherings](#)

Document was prepared by Sacramento County's [Environmental Management Department](#)

Summary of Revisions

9/17/2020: Initial version

10/9/2020: Added wording to stay in own neighborhood this year, not to travel to trick-or-treat.

10/14/2020: Added safer alternatives for Dia de los Muertos and updated requirements for private gatherings. Added updated guidance for private events and gatherings.

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PHO: 10/13/2020