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Soon our streets will be scattered with little ghosts, goblins, and witches trick-or-treating this Halloween. "Halloween should be filled with surprise and enjoyment, and following some common sense practices can keep events safer and more fun," said Sheriff Coy Reid of Catawba County.

The Sheriff reminds all Catawba County residents to follow these safety tips:

Motorists:

- Watch for children darting out from between parked cars.
- Watch for children walking on roadways, medians and curbs.
- Enter and exit driveways and alleys carefully.
- At twilight and later in the evening, watch for children in dark clothing.

Parents:

- Make sure that an adult or an older responsible youth will be supervising the outing for children under age 12.
- Check the sex offender registry at sexoffender.ncsbi.gov/ when planning your child's trick-or-treat route. You can view maps that pinpoint registered offenders' addresses in your neighborhood and sign up to get email alerts when an offender moves nearby.
- Plan and discuss the route trick-or-treaters intend to follow. Know the names of older children's companions.
- Make sure older kids trick-or-treat in a group.
- Instruct your children to travel only in familiar areas and along an established route.
- Teach your children to stop only at houses or apartment buildings that are well-lit and never to enter a stranger's home.
- Establish a return time.
- Tell your youngsters not to eat any treats until they return home.
- Review all appropriate trick-or-treat safety precautions, including pedestrian/traffic safety rules.
- All children need to know their home telephone number and how to call 9-1-1 in case of emergency.
- Pin a slip of paper with the child's name, address, and telephone number inside a pocket in case the youngster gets separated from the group.

Costume Design:

- Only fire-retardant materials should be used for costumes.
- Costumes should be loose so warm clothes can be worn underneath.
- Costumes should not be so long that they are a tripping hazard.
- Make sure that shoes fit well to prevent trips and falls.
- If children are allowed out after dark, outfits should be made with light colored materials. Strips of retro-reflective tape should be used to make children visible.

Face Design:

- Do not use masks as they can obstruct a child's vision. Use facial make-up instead.
- When buying special Halloween makeup, check for packages containing ingredients that are labeled "Made with U.S. Approved Color Additives," "Laboratory Tested," "Meets Federal

Standards for Cosmetics," or "Non-Toxic." Follow manufacturer's instruction for application.

- If masks are worn, they should have nose and mouth openings and large eye holes.

Accessories:

- Knives, swords, and other accessories should be made from cardboard or flexible materials. Do not allow children to carry sharp objects.
- Bags or sacks carried by youngsters should be light-colored or trimmed with retro-reflective tape if children are allowed out after dark.
- Carrying flashlights with fresh batteries will help children see better and be seen more clearly.

While Trick-or-Treating:

- Do not enter homes or apartments without adult supervision.
- Walk; do not run, from house to house. Do not cross yards and lawns where unseen objects or the uneven terrain can present tripping hazards.
- Walk on sidewalks, not in the street.
- Walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic, if there are no sidewalks.

Treats:

- Give children an early meal before going out.
- Insist that treats be brought home for inspection before anything is eaten.
- Wash fruit and slice it into small pieces.
- Throw away any candy that is unwrapped or partially wrapped or has a strange odor, color, or texture.

Homeowners/Decorations:

- Keep candles and Jack O' Lanterns away from landings and doorsteps where costumes could brush against the flame.
- Remove obstacles from lawns, steps, and porches when expecting trick-or-treaters.
- Keep candles and Jack O' Lanterns away from curtains, decorations, and other combustibles that could catch fire.
- Do not leave your house unattended.

"Halloween is a fun time in Catawba County," Sheriff Reid concluded, "but let's make it a safe time as well. The major dangers are not from witches or spirits but rather from falls and pedestrian/car crashes."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Coy Reid". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'C' and 'R'.