

Kenner clinic, PMO share Halloween safety reminders

Fort Lee's trick-or-treat hours are set for 6-8 p.m. Oct. 31, and post residents and visitors – particularly those who plan to participate in this evening of spooky fun – are reminded that extra precautions will need to be taken to ensure the safety of the installation's smallest residents.

The speed limit in all housing areas is 15 miles-per-hour, however, motorists should drive even slower in areas where children are present and pay extra attention when passing vehicles parked along the curb as they may obscure excited youngsters and other pedestrians crossing the street.

Post housing residents who plan to hand out treats should leave their porch light on, while those not interested or unavailable should turn them off. This also promotes safety by illuminating walkways and making potential tripping hazards visible. Along those same lines, residents can help by picking up anything a child could trip over like garden hoses, toys, bikes and lawn decorations, and sweeping wet leaves from the sidewalk and steps.

A parent or a responsible adult should always accompany young children during the neighborhood rounds while trick-or-treating. Notify the Fort Lee Police of any lost children whose sponsor cannot be readily located.

Other Halloween-related tips offered by the Provost Marshal Office and Wilkerson Pediatric Clinic at Kenner include the following:

- When pumpkin-carving with children, let them draw shapes and faces with a marker and restrict the actual cutting to adults. Use battery-operated lights. If using a candle with a flame, keep it away from walkways or places where it could ignite clothing or curtains.
- Costumes should be flame retardant and fit properly. Avoid oversize shoes, high heels and long skirts or pants that could cause a child to fall. Masks are not recommended. Always choose non-toxic and hypoallergenic make-up if children want to decorate their face.
- Serve kids a healthy dinner before trick-or-treating so they won't fill up on candy. Remind them not to eat any goodies collected until they are checked out by an adult to ensure they're safe.
- When selecting items for trick-or-treaters, consider alternatives like trick-or-treat gift certificates, colored pencils, stickers or decorative shoelaces. Avoid treats that pose a choking hazard such as gum, peanuts, hard candy or small toys.
- Only trick-or-treat in well-known areas. Never enter a stranger's home or car for a treat. Never agree to help a stranger find a lost person or pet. Stay with your parent or group.
- Obey traffic and pedestrian regulations; always walk, never run across a street. Only cross the street as a group. Use marked crosswalks when available. Remove masks or items limiting eyesight before crossing a street.

- Use a flashlight that can be seen by others. Place reflective tape on costumes, outer clothing and/or candy containers.
- Instruct children to get out of cars on the curb side, not the traffic side.
- Establish a curfew for older children.
- Set a limit on the number of days candy can remain in the house after Halloween before it is thrown out.
- A scary movie on television or video is a Halloween tradition many children can't resist. Unfortunately, quite a few experience nightmares after watching these films and may not be able to discern make-believe from reality. The pediatric clinic often sees children with sleep problems resulting from scary movies that were inappropriate for their age.

To promote safety, PMO personnel will conduct vehicle and bike patrols throughout Halloween evening. Volunteers from military units on post also will be walking through neighborhoods to discourage potentially harmful behavior. Law enforcement authorities should be notified immediately of any suspicious or unlawful activity.

Residents are encouraged to notify military and/or Department of the Army Civilian Police patrols on site or call (804) 734-7400 if they have additional concerns or safety issues. For more Halloween safety tips, visit www.halloween.safety.com.

- *Wilkerson Pediatric Clinic and PMO*