

WisDOC: Probation and parole agents, law enforcement work together to protect communities during Halloween trick-or-treating

Posted on Tuesday, Oct 23, 2018

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MADISON - The Wisconsin Department of Corrections is partnering with local law enforcement agencies across Wisconsin to conduct random home visits of registered sex offenders on community supervision during local trick-or-treating hours.

The Department supervises 65,762 offenders on community supervision, including 5,856 registered sex offenders. Each Halloween, probation and parole agents remind sex offenders of Halloween-specific restrictions and hold them accountable for any violations.

These restrictions, which have been established to protect children while they are trick-or-treating, prohibit sex offenders on community supervision from:

- Having any Halloween decorations, either inside or outside their residence;
- Handing out candy or participating in trick or treat activities;
- Wearing a Halloween costume; or
- Turning on their porch light during trick or treating hours.

In 2017, probation and parole agents conducted more than 2,100 home visits and took 38 sex offenders into custody for alleged supervision violations. During 2017, the Department referred 709 sex offenders to prosecutors for non-compliance with sex offender registration requirements.

Sex Offender Registration Program Director Grace Knutson shared the following important reminders for safe trick-or-treating:

- Children should always be accompanied by a parent or trusted adult.
- Stay on well-lit streets and stick to neighborhoods you know well.
- Only stop at homes with a lit porch light.
- Never enter a home or car for a treat.
- Trick-or-treaters are encouraged to carry a cell phone for quick communication.
- Call 911 if you see any suspicious or unlawful activity.
- Children should yell “No!” and try to escape if a stranger tries to take them somewhere.
- Have a responsible adult check treats at the end of the night.

Before trick-or-treating, parents are encouraged to sit down with their children to discuss these tips and develop a strategy if families get separated.

The [Wisconsin Sex Offender Registry website](#) enables users to search for a specific offender, search for offenders up to three miles from a specific address, or search for all offenders in a certain municipality, ZIP code, or county.

Members of the public can also contact the Sex Offender Safe Tip Line at 1-877-234-0085 with questions or to report potential violations of Halloween restrictions. If the public sees any unlawful activity or they feel threatened, they should call 911.