

# Dept. of Corrections: Aims to ensure safe trick-or-treating through home visits

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The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) is again working with law enforcement this Halloween to conduct random home visits of registered sex offenders on DOC supervision. These checks will happen in communities across the state during local trick-or-treating hours.

The DOC supervises nearly 63,000 people on community supervision, probation or parole, including 6,240 registered sex offenders. Each year, DOC probation and parole agents remind those on the state's Sex Offender Registry of Halloween-specific restrictions and work to ensure they are held accountable for any rule violations.

Restrictions for registered sex offenders were established to protect children out trick-or-treating, and they include:

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

DOC did not work with law enforcement to make these checks last year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, agents and law enforcement conduct more than 2,500 home visits across the state and took 34 people into custody for suspected violation of their rules of supervision.

DOC suggests parents sit down with their children before trick-or-treating to develop a strategy for if their family gets separated, and also go over these tips for safe trick-or-treating:

- A parent or trusted adult should always accompany children
- Stay on well-lit streets and stick to neighborhoods you know
- Only stop at homes where the porch light is on
- Never enter a home or car for a treat
- Trick-or-treaters should carry a cell phone to allow for quick communication
- If the child carries a cell phone, activate location services prior to trick-or-treating
- Call 911 if you see any suspicious or illegal activity
- Children should yell “No!” and run from any stranger who tries to take them somewhere
- Have a responsible adult check treats at the end of the night

The [Wisconsin Sex Offender Registry](#) website lets users search for a specific offender, check for registered sex offenders within three miles of a specific address, and search for all registered offenders in a certain municipality, ZIP code or county. People can also call the Sex Offender Safe Tip Line at 1-877-234-0085 if they have any questions or want to report violations of Halloween restrictions. However, they should call 911 if they see unlawful activity or feel threatened.