



Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Scott Walker | Secretary Jon E. Litscher

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 19, 2017

DOC Communications, 608-240-5060

DOCMedia@wisconsin.gov

Department of Corrections Probation and Parole Agents Conduct Home Visits During Halloween to Protect Wisconsin Communities

MADISON – As part of its efforts to keep children safe during Halloween trick-or-treating, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) will be conducting random home visits of registered sex offenders on community supervision during local trick or treating hours.

DOC's Division of Community Corrections supervises more than 65,000 offenders in the community, including 5,771 registered sex offenders on community supervision. DOC's primary focus during Halloween is holding offenders accountable for their behavior and keeping the public safe.

Each year, DOC establishes Halloween-specific restrictions for registered sex offenders to protect the public. These restrictions include:

- 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 2016, DOC Probation and Parole Agents conducted more than 2,100 home visits, taking 29 sex offenders into custody for alleged supervision violations.

Grace Knutson, DOC's Sex Offender Registry Director, also shared the following common-sense tips 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.
- 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.

(continued on next page)

The [Wisconsin Sex Offender Registry website](#) enables users to search for a specific offender, search for offenders up to 3 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 Registry program at 1-877-234-0085 with questions or to report potential violations of Halloween restrictions.

NOTE TO MEDIA: Media outlets who wish to participate in offender home visits with DOC Probation and Parole agents must e-mail DOCMedia@wisconsin.gov by the end of the day on Tuesday, October 25th with the following information:

1. First and last name(s) and mobile phone numbers of individuals from the media outlet who will be participating;
2. Name of the media outlet; and
3. 2-3 municipalities where you wish to participate in home visits, including the date and time you are available during trick or treating hours.

DOC will also have staff available for media interviews from October 23rd to 27th:

- Grace Knutson, DOC Sex Offender Registration Program Director, will be available in person or by phone at DOC Headquarters in Madison.
- Regional staff will be available for in-person media interviews.

To arrange an interview, please contact DOCMedia@wisconsin.gov.

###