Safety Scare: Halloween Product Recalls, Reports, and Injuries

(CHICAGO) The hazards of the Halloween season are not limited to the night of the holiday itself: injuries and mishaps from Halloween related products are a threat anytime throughout the season. A new report by Kids In Danger (KID) analyses data on recalled Halloween products, consumer reports on the Halloween products still on the market, and statistics on motor-vehicle pedestrian injuries on Halloween itself.

KID has released a new report, *Safety Scare! Halloween Product Recalls, Reports, and Injuries*. This report began with reviewing data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) on recalled Halloween products within the past ten years. Between January 1, 2009 and October 22, 2018, ten Halloween related products were recalled, an average of one product per year. The most common hazard these products posed were fire or burn risks, but there were also cases of choking and button-battery ingestion being the cause of the recall. Unfortunately, many of these recalls do not occur during the actual season of Halloween, and because recalls do not remove products from those who are already in possession them, consumers may already have a dangerous product in their homes. Parents are advised to research recalled products on CPSS's database on cpsc.gov to make sure they are not in possession of dangerous Halloween products.

Additionally, KID found that on CPSC's Publicly Available Consumer Product Safety Information Database website, SaferProducts.gov, 19 consumers had made reports of hazardous Halloween products between 2009 and 2018. 7 of those reports claimed that a child had either been put at risk or injured by the product, and injuries related to the product ranged from mild burns to a serious case of choking and poisoning. The primary type product reported on was costumes or masks, most of which were marketed towards children. It should be noted that none of the products reported on in the past ten years have since been recalled.

KID's report also discovered that an average 840 U.S. house fires every year were caused by seasonal decorations such as Halloween candles, and that such open candles cause 36% of such fires. In addition to house fires, traffic injuries increase on the night of Halloween itself: the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted an analysis on the mortality rate of Halloween night for children and adolescents between 1975 and 1996, and discovered that 89 pedestrian deaths of children between the ages of 5 and 14 occurred on October 31st between 4:00 P.M. and 10:00 PM. This is 1% of the total number of the total child pedestrian deaths in this time period. Furthermore, CDC found that any child is four times more likely to be fatally injured as a pedestrian by a car on Halloween night than on any other night.

"KID has a personal interest in protecting children from the dangers of Halloween" stated Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of KID. "Parents need to be aware of dangerous products that have been recalled, as well as those that are still on the market. They also must be able to carefully prepare for the holiday by making sure all costumes and decorations they make or buy are safe for their children to use and be around."

"Many people are unaware of just how dangerous the streets can be on Halloween night" said Madeleine Phelan, KID Report Researcher. "It's very important that children travel in large groups, with flashlights and reflective clothing, and especially look both ways before crossing the street and only cross in safe areas."

KID also recommends that parents visit the CPSC website, CPSC.gov, as well as SaferProducts.gov, to research recalled and reported Halloween products. Parents are further advised to use battery-operated lights or glowsticks instead of open-flame candles, and to purchase or make fire resistant costumes that do not obstruct breathing or vision.

Visit KidsInDanger.org for more information.