



## Safety Score: Halloween Product Recalls, Reports, and Injuries

The following report by Kids In Danger (KID) focuses on hazardous products related to Halloween. Many families are more than familiar with the dangers of Halloween night: any holiday that revolves around children running door-to-door after dark warrants some precautions. But consumers, children included, can encounter hazardous products around the holiday. Below are the statistics on the Halloween products recalled in the past ten years, as well as on individual consumer reports on hazardous products and injuries. This can help you look out for similar products this year and keep Halloween fun and safe.

### Halloween Product Recalls Between 2009-2018

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), created under the 1972 Consumer Product Safety Act, is the commission responsible for protecting the public from products that can pose burn, fire, chemical, electrical, or mechanical risks. The CPSC reported that between January 2009 to October 2018, the commission recalled ten Halloween related products. These products are listed below, along with the dates they were recalled and how many units were manufactured prior to the recall.

**Table 1: Halloween Products Recalled (2009-2018)**

Product Name	Retailer	Date Recalled
Halloween Flashlights	Target	10/28/2009
Pumpkin, Ghost and Skull Halloween Lanterns	Dollar Tree	10/28/2010
Little Pet Vet costumes and Dr. Littles costumes	Fun World	03/09/2011
Halloween Projection Flashlights	Nygala Corp.	12/01/2011
Halloween Mini Projection Lights	Atico International	11/01/2011
Projector Flashlight	Meijer	10/28/2014
LATTJO Bat Cape Costume	IKEA	04/07/2016
Halloween LED gel clings	Target	10/20/2016
Nickelodeon PAW PATROL Deluxe Marshall Hat with flashlight	Spirit Halloween	04/05/2018
3-Tier Haunted Townhouse candle holders	Michael's	05/15/2018

Almost every year, there is at least one hazardous Halloween product that is officially recalled and ceases to be produced, the most recent being Michael’s 3-Tier Haunted House Candle Holders (Recalled May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018), and Spirit Halloween’s Paw Patrol Marshall Hat with Flashlight (Recalled April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018). Both of these products were recalled due to the fire/burn hazard they posed. In fact, fire/burn hazards were the cause of many of the Halloween product recalls in the past ten years. The following table reports the hazards caused by the nine recalled products.

**Table 2: The Hazards of Recalled Halloween Products (2009-2018)**

<b>Types of Hazards</b>	<b>Total Number of Recalled Products</b>	<b>Total Units of Recalled Products</b>
<b>Fire/Burn</b>	5	1,334,330
<b>Burn (Only)</b>	2	11,600
<b>Choking/Button Battery Ingestion</b>	1	127,000
<b>Choking (Only)</b>	1	1,800
<b>Strangulation</b>	1	11,000

The button battery ingestion hazard is especially dangerous as the tiny batteries can be swallowed by small children and thus pose the risk of burning the esophagus or the intestines with released electrical charges. For this reason, CPSC recalled Target’s Halloween LED Gel Clings (Recalled October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018), which contained easily removable button batteries. Nevertheless, Target produced 127,000 units prior to the recall, and the recall does not remove the products from the homes of those consumers who have already purchased them.

It should also be noted that many recalls on Halloween products do not happen during the Halloween season. Because of this, many parents and caregivers will be unaware if a decoration or costume they have already purchased and are planning to use next Halloween has been declared unsafe to use. Parents are advised to research any products they already own using the CPSC database on CPSC.gov, to ensure they are not in possession of a potentially hazardous product.

## Examples of Recently Recalled Products



*Michael's 3-Tier Haunted House  
Candle Holders*



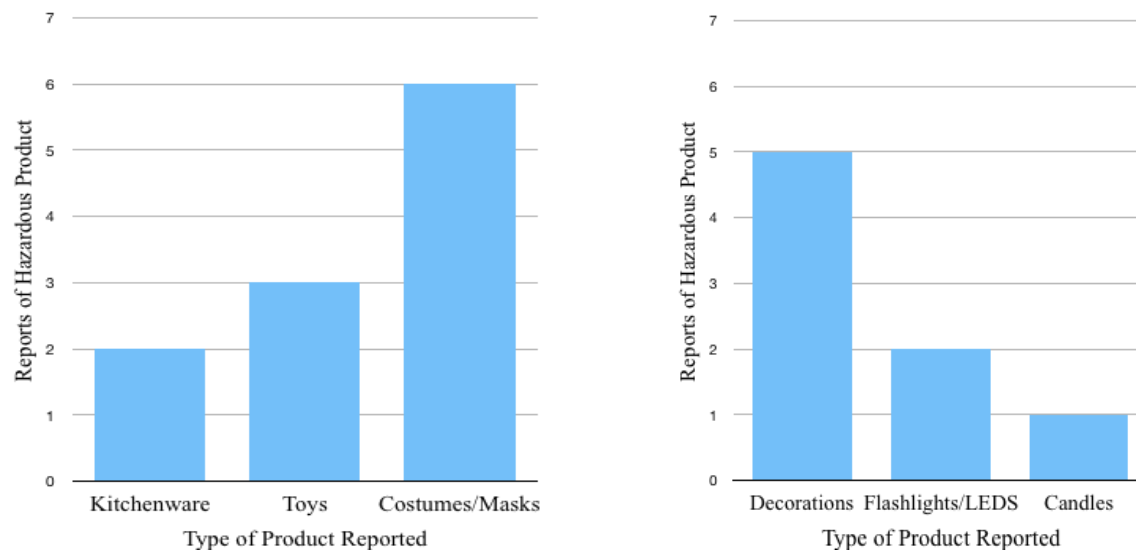
*Spirit Halloween's Paw Patrol Marshall Hat  
with Flashlight*



*Target's Halloween LED Gel Clings*

## Reports of Hazardous Halloween Products (2009-2018)

CPSC's Publicly Available Consumer Product Safety Information Database website, SaferProducts.gov, allows concerned consumers to report accounts of product related injuries or products they believe to be hazardous. Between 2009 and 2018, 19 consumers made reports of injuries or hazards on account of products related to Halloween. 7 of those 19 reports claimed the product had either injured or posed an injury to the reporter's child, and the majority of the remaining reports claimed the same about the family related decorations or toys they had purchased. Below are graphs that demonstrate the types of Halloween related products reported on SaferProducts.gov.



As demonstrated in the graphs, the primary subjects of the reports were costumes and masks, with decorations as the secondary and toys in third. Retailers primarily market these three types of products towards children or adults with children. Nearly all reports of costumes and masks involved risks of either choking or asphyxiation, whereas the hazards of the decorations were primarily battery-related burn/fire risks. A few consumers also reported more serious injuries. On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, a consumer reported that contact with a small ghost Halloween decoration made by Two's Company caused the consumer, an elderly woman, to develop a serious and painful rash around her mouth and tongue. Another consumer reported that small particles wafting off of a ghoulish Halloween decoration at a Family Dollar store caused an employee to develop a serious bloody nose and painful coughing. None of the products reported have been recalled.

## Halloween Injury Statistics

Every holiday is associated with a number of risks and injuries, and Halloween can be particularly dangerous. The National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) reported that between 2011-2015 in the United States, fire departments responded to an average of 840 house fires per year that were caused by seasonal decorations (excluding Christmas trees), including Halloween products. Furthermore, candles such as the ones used during Halloween were the leading cause of home decoration house fires, causing 36% of such fires when another decoration got too close to the open flame or when something caused the candle to tip over.

Traffic related injuries also increase on Halloween, especially for children and adolescents. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted an analysis of the mortality data recorded in the Fatal Analysis Reporting System (FARS) of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), to characterize the number of fatal pedestrian deaths among children on Halloween night in the United States between the years of 1975 and 1996. The analysis found that out of the 8,846 pedestrian deaths of children (aged 5 to 14 years old) that occurred on any evening between 1975 and 1996, 89 (1%) of those deaths occurred between 4:00-10:00 p.m. on October 31<sup>st</sup>. What this means is that one in every one hundred of those child pedestrian deaths occurred on Halloween night. The CDC states that this analysis may even undercount the number of deaths because FARS does not include “off-road” crashes (i.e. crashes that occur on sidewalks, driveways, etc.). But overall, motor-vehicle crashes killed an average of 4 children every Halloween night between these years. Compared to the average one child death per night that occurs every other evening, this means that children are four times as likely to be fatally injured as a pedestrian in a motor-vehicle accident on Halloween night than they would be any other evening.

### **Conclusion: What Can Be Done?**

The best way to prevent children, or any other participants in Halloween festivities, from injury is to thoroughly and carefully prepare for the holiday. KID recommends that parents go to CPSC’s website, [cpsc.gov](http://cpsc.gov), to learn about recently recalled Halloween products and to research the products they already own. They are also advised visit [Saferproducts.gov](http://Saferproducts.gov) to read about other potentially hazardous products. Any consumer who has an incident with or is aware of a hazardous product should make a report on [Saferproducts.gov](http://Saferproducts.gov). Furthermore, CPSC encourages consumers to purchase or make fire-resistant costumes with no small parts for children under three that can break off and cause children to choke, and masks that provide peripheral vision and proper ventilation. Consumers should also choose to light jack-o-lanterns with battery-operated lights or glowsticks that do not use open flames, and all burning candles must be kept in an area where they cannot be knocked over or set any other flammable object ablaze. Costumes and sacks should also be decorated with reflective materials to make them more visible in the dark, and children should carry flashlights or glowsticks with them at all times.

### **Contact Kids In Danger**

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