



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** All SLO County Residents  
**From:** Dr. Penny Borenstein, County Public Health Officer  
**Date:** October 2, 2020  
**Subject:** Recommended Activities for a Safe Halloween (Guidance)

## Summary

COVID-19 continues to pose a substantial risk to those in San Luis Obispo County. Our community is doing a tremendous job adapting the way we do everything in order to slow the spread of COVID-19 and prevent larger outbreaks. As the fall and winter holiday season approaches, each of us will also need to take a different approach to celebrating this year. This will include avoiding high-risk activities that can easily spread COVID-19 and replacing or modifying them with fun, low-risk alternatives.

This guidance provides SLO County community members with public health direction for celebrating the upcoming Halloween holiday safely – we can still enjoy Halloween fun while taking extra safety precautions. This guidance is in addition to the [Halloween considerations issued last month by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

## Guidance for a Safer Halloween

Much of our daily lives, including how we celebrate, has changed due to COVID-19, but there are still ways to safely celebrate the Halloween season.

NOTE: If you choose to take part in the higher risk, more traditional Halloween activities, take steps to reduce the risk to the greatest extent possible, such as:

1. Limit contact while distributing treats. For example:
  - a. Leave a bowl of pre-packaged, individual treats on your doorstep for trick-or-treaters to take.
  - b. Maintain physical distance by giving out prepackaged treats using a “reacher” or “grabber” arm extension tool, a small zipline, or a small slide.
2. Safely prepare treats:
  - a. All goodies should be commercially packaged, non-perishable treats
  - b. If you are preparing goodie bags yourself, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after preparing the bags
3. Wear a costume with a cloth face covering or wear a face covering when someone comes to your door. A costume mask is not a substitute for a cloth face covering.
4. Do not share food or drinks.
5. Only trick-or-treat with immediate family members or one or two other people with whom you have agreed to regularly spend time with (your social bubble).
6. Do not gather in larger groups.

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## Lowest Risk Activities for Celebrating Halloween

- Host or attend online parties or costume contests
- Eat a holiday-themed meal outdoors at a restaurant
- Decorate your house, apartment, or yard with Halloween-themed decorations
- Drive through events where people stay in their cars and don't mix with others outside their households (these may include parades where judges watch the vehicles drive by, and "judge" the entries while physical distancing between each other)
- Enjoy a Halloween movie night at a drive-in theater (following the [State's drive-in movie theater guidance](#))
- Carve or decorate pumpkins outside, at a safe distance, with neighbors or friends
- Enjoy a Halloween socially distanced scavenger hunt where children are given lists of Halloween-themed things to look for while they walk outdoors from house to house admiring Halloween decorations at a distance
- Visit a pumpkin patch or orchard where people use hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples, wear masks, and stay at least six feet apart

## Higher Risk Activities

- Traditional door-to-door trick-or-treating
- Trunk or treating, where treats are handed out from trunks of cars

## Highest Risk (Not Permitted)

- Carnivals or festivals
- Live entertainment (including live music)
- Indoor and outdoor haunted house attractions where people are gathered close and screaming
- In-person parties or gatherings (including outdoor social gatherings) with people not part of your small social bubble

## Conclusion

There are still ways to enjoy the holiday, while being safe and continuing to do everything you can to slow the spread. We have recently made progress with our move to the Red Tier of the State's [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#). If we continue to do our part and celebrate Halloween safely, we can protect our community and work toward opening more of SLO County.