



# **NEVADA RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDANCE FOR CELEBRATING: Halloween**

*Updated October 14, 2020*

Celebrating Halloween is a cherished fall tradition for many Nevadans, but in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it remains critical that we do all we can to minimize the risk of catching or spreading the COVID-19 virus while having fun on these special days.

Many traditional Halloween activities, such as door-to-door trick-or-treating, may appear low risk because they take place outdoors or the interactions may be short. However, when a lot of people participate in lower-risk activities at the same time, it raises the potential for disease spread across the state. As Nevadans plan their Halloween activities, they are urged to consider and follow the guidelines and best practices below.

## **GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICES**

- Outdoor gatherings are generally safer than indoor gatherings.
- Smaller groups are generally safer than larger groups. Avoid crowds.
- Shorter gatherings are generally safer than longer gatherings.
- It's safer to gather with people who consistently wear face coverings/masks (non-costume), keep physical distance, and follow other prevention recommendations.
- Participating in virtual activities is the safest option.
- Wear a mask that fully covers your nose and mouth, wash your hands frequently, and keep your distance whenever you are out in public or around people who are not a part of your household. (A Halloween mask is not a substitute for a cloth mask.)
- Maintain at least 6 feet of distance from people outside your household.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid touching your face, nose, mouth or eyes with unwashed or just sanitized hands
- Be mindful that using alcohol and drugs can cloud judgement and increase riskier behaviors.
- Stay home & avoid contact with others if:
  - Have recently tested positive for COVID-19 and are currently in the isolation period.
  - Are currently waiting on the results of a COVID-19 test.
  - You are sick, have any respiratory infection symptoms, or any COVID-19 symptoms.
  - Any household member has COVID-19, is exhibiting respiratory infection symptoms, or any COVID-19 symptoms.
  - You have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and are currently in the quarantine period.
  - You believe to have been recently exposed or come into contact with a COVID-19 case.

All Nevadans must play their part by considering how to help lower the risk of infection, not only for yourself and your family, but for your community. Here are more ideas about how to celebrate more safely.

**ALWAYS REMEMBER:** *In general, the more people you interact with, the more closely you interact with them, and the longer that interaction, the higher your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Indoor spaces are more risky than outdoor spaces because indoors, it can be harder to keep people at least 6 feet apart and the ventilation is not as good as it is outdoors.*

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is general guidance and recommendations for celebrating Halloween, [consistent with CDC guidance](#).

### **Follow Local Guidance**

As Nevadans prepare for Halloween, residents and visitors should look to the appropriate local health authority for the most current and up-to-date guidance and recommendation on activities. Each county should assess their current situation and make a determination on how to safely celebrate Halloween.

### **Protect yourself and others in your community**

Regardless of where you live in Nevada, in order to protect yourself, your family and others in your community, do not participate in any in-person activities, including handing out candy, if you:

- Have recently tested positive for COVID-19 and are currently in the isolation period.
- Are currently waiting on the results of a COVID-19 test.
- You are sick, have any respiratory infection symptoms, or any [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- Any household member has COVID-19, is exhibiting respiratory infection symptoms, or any [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- You have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and are currently in the quarantine period.
- You believe to have been recently exposed or come into contact with a COVID-19 case.

If you or someone in your household has an [increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19](#), you should strongly consider the risks and benefits of activities they are considering.

### **Trick-or-Treating:**

The Nevada Department of Health and Human Services encourages alternatives to traditional, door-to-door trick-or-treating this year to limit the potential spread of COVID-19, due to the following precautions:

- Door-to-door trick-or-treating results in many closer interactions over a short period of time. Taken together, these may raise the risk of COVID-19 spread.
- Door-to-door trick-or-treating involves mixing lots of different households at close range. When you open your door to hand out candy, you are unlikely to be able to keep at least 6 feet of distance.
- It can be hard not to mingle with friends and neighbors. Even if you intend not to interact, by being out and about, it may be hard to avoid.

- Communicate with your neighbors to plan trick-or-treating this year. Get creative, and figure out ways to hand out candy while keeping appropriate distance. For example:
  - Line up individually wrapped treats at the end of the driveway or yard's edge. Watch the fun, and enjoy the costumes from a distance.
  - Use a plastic slide, cardboard tubes, or plastic pipes to deliver candy from a distance.
  - Take kids on an outdoor, distanced treasure hunt to look for candy or Halloween-themed items.

**If trick-or-treating is permitted in your county**, please trick-or-treat the safe way:

- Place individually wrapped candy outside on the porch, driveway, or table.
- Stay with your household members and avoid mingling with groups from other households. Maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet from anyone not within your household.
- ALWAYS wear a face covering. Halloween masks **DO NOT** count as a face covering.
- If going door-to-door, limit the time you spend at doorways.
- Clean hands before and after touching the wrapped candy. Use hand sanitizer often, especially after contacting frequently touched surfaces and before eating anything.
- Trick-or-treat only in family/household groups and don't congregate in large groups.
- Try to trick-or-treat in your own neighborhood and do not travel to other neighborhoods, to avoid potential exposure to different groups of people.
- Have adults (preferably no more than one adult) accompany trick-or-treaters to help them follow precautions. Follow all standard Halloween safety guidance, including reflective tape or stickers and carrying glow sticks or flashlights to help increase visibility among drivers.
- Whether you're trick-or-treating or handing out candy, keep your masks on -- save the candy eating for when you return home!

#### **Costume masks vs. COVID-19 masks**

- **Costume masks are not a substitute for face coverings and masks** that protect against the spread of COVID-19. Masks that protect against COVID-19, should be made from two or more breathable fabric layers that cover the nose and mouth, with no gaps around the face. Wear non-costume masks when indoors with non-household contacts and outdoors whenever 6 feet of distance cannot be maintained.
- If wearing a costume mask over a cloth mask makes it hard to breathe, consider a Halloween-themed cloth mask as part of the costume instead.
- Kids age 9 years and younger are not required to wear a mask, but we recommend everyone 3 years and older wear one, unless they cannot medically tolerate it.
- In Nevada, children ages 10 and above are required to wear face coverings. Exemptions, such as medical conditions, are outlined in [Directive 024](#).

## ACTIVITIES BY RISK LEVEL: Halloween

In addition, the following guidelines below have been issued by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**NOTE:** *If screaming will likely occur, greater distancing is advised. The greater the distance, the lower the risk of spreading a respiratory virus.*

### **Lower Risk Activities**

These lower risk activities can be safe alternatives and are the most highly recommended by the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services:

- **Carving or decorating pumpkins** with members of your household and displaying them. If you carve or decorate pumpkins with neighbors and friends (non-household members), which is not recommended, you should do so outside at a safe distance.
- **Decorating your house**, apartment, or living space.
- Instead of trick-or-treating door-to-door, put together a **Halloween scavenger hunt** with household members where children are given lists of Halloween-themed things to look for while they walk outdoors around their home admiring Halloween decorations at a distance.
- Having a **virtual Halloween costume contest** or pumpkin-carving contest.
- Set up a **virtual scary movie night** and simultaneously watch with friends from your own homes.
- Create a **virtual haunted house experience**. Set it up in your own home, and virtually guide people through the horror.

### **Moderate Risk Activities**

- Participating in **one-way trick-or-treating** where individually wrapped goodie bags are lined up for families to grab and go while continuing to social distance (such as at the end of a driveway or at the edge of a yard).
  - If you are preparing goodie bags, [wash your hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 second before and after preparing the bags.
- Organize a **drive-by yard/home decorating contest** where neighbors pick their favorite yards.
- Visit an **open-air, one-way, walk-through pumpkin patch**, corn maze or orchard where people use hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples, wearing masks is encouraged or enforced, and people are able to maintain social distancing.
- Organize a **small group, open-air neighborhood costume parade** with predetermined routes marked to maintain safe distances of at least 6 feet between participants.
- If you are **hosting or attending a gathering at a private residence**, please review all protocols in the [Nevada COVID-19 Residential Gatherings guidance](#), including limiting to 10 guests indoors and 25 guests outdoors, only if adequate social distancing can be met. If possible, all gatherings should be held outdoors. Conducting health screenings for guests is strongly encouraged [[See COVID-19 Health Screening document](#)]
  - Have an outdoor Halloween movie night with local family and friends, with people wearing face coverings/masks and spaced at least 6 feet apart. If screaming is likely (boo!), we advise greater distancing.

- Attending a costume party held outdoors where protective masks are used and people can remain more than 6 feet apart.
  - A costume mask (such as for Halloween) is not a substitute for a cloth mask. A costume mask should not be used unless it is made of two or more layers of breathable fabric that covers the mouth and nose and doesn't leave gaps around the face.
  - Do not wear a costume mask over a protective cloth mask because it can be dangerous if the costume mask makes it hard to breathe. Instead, consider using a Halloween-themed cloth mask.

For those looking to host a larger gathering, all requirements outlined in the [Nevada Guidance for Safe Gatherings guidance](#) must be followed, in accordance with Directive 033. See "Guidance for event planners" below in this guidance document.

### **Higher Risk Activities**

The **CDC recommends avoiding** the following higher risk activities to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19:

- Participating in traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children and individuals who go door to door.
- Having trunk-or-treat where treats are handed out from trunks of cars lined up in large parking lots.
- Attending crowded costume parties held indoors.
- Going to an indoor haunted house where people may be crowded together and screaming.
- Going on hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household.
- Using [alcohol or drugs](#), which can cloud judgement and increase risky behaviors.
- Traveling to a [rural](#) fall festival that is not in your community if you live in an area with community spread of COVID-19.

## **GUIDANCE FOR EVENT PLANNERS**

*Pumpkin patches, haunted houses, corn mazes, etc. held in public spaces*

- Adhere to state and local orders and restrictions.
- Require timed reservations to limit occupants, lines, and areas of congestion.
- Create a one-direction flow of participants with signs, directional arrows, and spacing indicators.
- Remind participants before arrival and onsite to stay home if sick, exposed, positive for COVID-19, or quarantined.
- Use signs to remind participants to use masks, maintain distance, and wash hands.
- Set up handwashing stations.
- Eliminate common-touch items and props.
- Consider exclusively outdoor spaces.

- Require COVID-19 face coverings/masks at all times, except when actively eating or drinking.
- For a full list of guidance and requirements, please review the [Nevada Guidance for Safe Gatherings](#).

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL SICK OR MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED**

If you participated in a Halloween celebration and begin to feel sick or think you may have become exposed:

1. Take extra precautions for 14 days including staying home as much as possible.
2. Limit interactions with those with an increased risk of severe illness.
3. Take a COVID-19 test. [Click here](#) to locate a testing site near you.

If you become symptomatic or if you test positive for COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider and follow CDC guidance on what to do if you become sick:

- If you have been identified as a close contact to a positive COVID-19 patient, quarantine for a minimum of 14 days, even if you show no symptoms.
- If you are waiting on COVID-19 test results, quarantine at home as you wait for the results.
- If your result is positive, you will be contacted by the Department of Health or the local health authority within the jurisdiction where you live.
  - You will be asked about your health and who you have been in close contact with, and where you have visited to identify other persons who may need to quarantine. Your information is confidential.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- [State of Nevada Guidance for Safe Gatherings](#)
- [State of Nevada Guidance for Private Residential Gatherings](#)
- [State of Nevada Face Covering Guidance](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [COVID-19 Holiday Celebrations](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Hosting gatherings or cookouts](#)