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News Release

*For Immediate Release*

### **Caution Urged During Halloween Celebrations**

City of Springfield public safety departments encourage people to pay special attention to pedestrian safety this season, especially on Halloween when small children may be crossing city streets while trick-or-treating.

Traffic-related pedestrian fatalities have been an unfortunate reality in Springfield in 2012. The City's Public Works traffic operations division released a [crash report](#) today showing seven traffic-related pedestrian fatalities between January 1 and July 30 of this year. Most of these crashes occurred at night, and with the pedestrian entering the roadway against the signal or jaywalking.

Pedestrians are urged to refrain from walking in the street or crossing streets at mid-block locations and are encouraged to cross streets at intersections, especially those with marked crosswalks and/or stop signs or traffic signals.

"We recommend wearing reflecting clothing when walking or biking at night," said Mandy Buettgen, senior engineering technician. "We also recommend motorists approach pedestrians walking on sidewalks or at intersections especially carefully, due to unpredictable behavior."

Parents are strongly encouraged to integrate reflective items in their children's Halloween costumes and to accompany them to help keep them safe. Springfield Fire and Life Safety Educator Cara Erwin tells parents if their child is wearing a mask, to make sure the eye holes are large enough so they can see easily.

"They should also stay away from billowing or long trailing fabric, when choosing costumes and take special precautions to keep children away from open flames. Be sure they know how to stop, drop and roll if their clothing catches fire," she said.

Other fire safety precautions include:

- Carrying flashlights or glow sticks. It is safest to use a flashlight or battery-operated candle in a jack-o'-lantern.
- Place lit pumpkins well away from anything that can burn and out of the way of trick-or-treaters, doorsteps, walkways and yards
- Keep exits clear of decorations, with nothing blocking escape routes.

Cpl. Matt Brown, with Springfield Police Department says that following a few simple safety tips could mean the difference between a fun and safe holiday and a dangerous or deadly one:

### Children Should:

- Cross the street only at corners or marked crosswalks.
- Never cross the street between parked cars.
- If there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic.
- Watch for cars backing or turning.

### Drivers Should:

- Drive in an extra cautious manner.
- Keep a keen eye open for children who forget safety rules.
- Reduce speed in residential neighborhoods.
- Obey traffic signs and signals.
- Use caution turning into or backing out of driveways and entering or exiting alleys.
- Approach intersections with caution.
- Watch for children at crossings, medians and in the streets.
- Allow children to get out of the car only at curbside.

### Parents Should:

- Have your children trick or treat from family and friends.
- Check out all treats at home in a well lit place.
- Remind kids not to enter strange houses.
- Set a time limit for children to trick or treat and map a safe route.
- Check the [Greene County Website](#) to know where all registered sex offenders live. By state law SB 714, SECTION 589.426 it restricts certain activities of sex offenders on Halloween. According to Brown, offenders are required to avoid all Halloween-related contact with children, remain inside his or her residence between 5 and 10:30 p.m. unless there is just cause to leave, post a sign stating, "No candy or treats at this residence", and leave all outside residential lighting off during the evening hours.

For more information, contact Cora Scott at 417-864-1009.