



TO: ALL Residents of Blandford

FROM: Blandford Board of Health

RE: Halloween Gatherings

1. The Blandford Board of Health has not, will not and did not ban Halloween or its Activities.

2. The Blandford Board of Health with the guidelines of Covid-19 Order #46, which states:

- A maximum gathering limitation of 25 people in doors and 100 persons for outdoors with exceptions to certain businesses and organizations governed by sector specific.
- Keeping 6' social distancing
- Face Covering for gatherings of more than 10 people, all persons over the age 2 must wear a face covering when attending indoor/outdoor gatherings with other participants other than those of the same household. This applies to all gatherings including: **private homes, back yards, parks, athletic fields, parking lots.**

And in trying to keep our community safe:

- **The location of the gathering** – Indoor gatherings generally pose more risk than outdoor gatherings. Indoor gatherings with poor ventilation pose more risk than those with good ventilation, such as those with open windows or doors.
- **The duration of the gathering** – Gatherings that last longer pose more risk than shorter gatherings.
- **The number of people at the gathering** – Gatherings with more people pose more risk than gatherings with fewer people. CDC does not have a limit or recommend a specific number of attendees for gatherings. The size of a holiday gathering should be determined based on the ability to reduce or limit contact between attendees, the risk of spread between attendees, and state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations.
- **The locations attendees are traveling from** – Gatherings with attendees who are traveling from different places pose a higher risk than gatherings with attendees who live in the same area. Higher levels of COVID-19 cases and community spread in the gathering location, or where attendees are coming from, increase the risk of infection and spread among attendees.
- **The behaviors of attendees prior to the gathering** – Gatherings with attendees who are not adhering to social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart), mask wearing, hand washing, and other prevention behaviors pose more risk than gatherings with attendees who are engaging in these preventative behaviors.
- **The behaviors of attendees during the gathering** – Gatherings with more preventive measures, such as mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing, in place pose less risk than gatherings where fewer or no preventive measures are being implemented.

People who should not attend in-person holiday celebrations

People with or exposed to COVID-19

Do not host or participate in any in-person festivities, if you or anyone in your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has not met the criteria for when it is safe to be around others

- Has symptoms of COVID-19
- Is waiting for COVID-19 viral test results
- May have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Is at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19

People at increased risk for severe illness

If you are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, or live or work with someone at increased risk of severe illness, you should

- Avoid in-person gatherings with people who do not live in your household.
- Avoid larger gatherings and consider attending activities that pose lower risk (as described throughout this page) if you decide to attend an in-person gathering with people who do not live in your household.

Halloween:

The CDC has classified Halloween activities below as:

Lower risk activities - These lower risk activities can be safe alternatives:

- Carving or decorating pumpkins with members of your household and displaying them
- Carving or decorating pumpkins outside, at a safe distance, with neighbors or friends
- Decorating your house, apartment, or living space
- Doing a Halloween 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
- Having a virtual Halloween costume contest
- Having a Halloween movie night with people you live with
- Having a scavenger hunt-style trick-or-treat search with your household members in or around your home rather than going house to house

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 seconds before and after preparing the bags.
- Having a small group, outdoor, open-air costume parade where people are distanced more than 6 feet apart
- 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.
- Going to an open-air, one-way, walk-through haunted forest where appropriate mask use is enforced, and people can remain more than 6 feet apart
 - If screaming will likely occur, greater distancing is advised. The greater the distance, the lower the risk of spreading a respiratory virus.
- Visiting pumpkin patches or orchards 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

- Having an outdoor Halloween movie night with local family friends with people spaced at least 6 feet apart
 - If screaming will likely occur, greater distancing is advised. The greater the distance, the lower the risk of spreading a respiratory virus.
 - Lower your risk by following CDC’s recommendations on [hosting gatherings or cook-outs](#).

Higher risk activities - Avoid these 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 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

3. The Blandford Board of Health suggests and with any Covid-19 Orders set forth by Governor Baker and his administration

- Enjoy Halloween **outside** rather than attending indoor events.
- Place candy on a platter instead of a bowl
- Instead of traditional trick or treating, opt for one-way trick-or-treating, with treats placed outside of the home for trick-or-treaters as a “grab and go” while keeping distance from others.
- Consider leaving hand sanitizer by any treats left out for trick-or-treaters to use.
- Wear a face mask or face covering.
 - A costume mask is not a substitute for a face mask or face covering. To protect yourself and others, ensure you are wearing a protective face mask or covering instead of or in addition to a costume mask.
- Observe good hand hygiene, including hand washing and use of alcohol-based sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol. Carry hand sanitizer and use it often, especially after coming into contact with frequently touched surfaces and before eating candy.
- Refrain from touching your face.
- Maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet of physical distance from all other participants who are not members of the same household.
- Avoid:
 - Attending crowded costume parties held indoors, or any gatherings that exceed indoor or outdoor gathering limits;
 - Going to an indoor haunted house where people may be crowded together and screaming; and
 - Going on hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household.
 - Indoor haunted houses; and
 - Hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household.
 - Stay home and refrain from Halloween activities, including handing out Halloween treats, if:
 - you feel unwell;
 - you have tested positive for COVID-19;
 - you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19; or
 - you have traveled to or from a state that is not classified as lower risk within the last 14 days.