

# YOUR HOME October 2008

TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING

## Halloween Safety!



Halloween is a fun time for children and can be for parents as well. Following these safety tips can help ensure a safe and fun Halloween for your children .

## Making Costumes Safe

- Make sure costumes are flame-retardant.
- Costumes should be kept short to prevent tripping.
- Have children wear comfortable shoes.
- Use make-up instead of a mask.
- Masks can be hot and can obstruct child's view.
- Children should wear light colors or place reflective tape on costumes.
- Make costume accessories, (such as knives, guns, or swords) from cardboard or flexible materials.

## Making Your Home and Neighborhood Safe

- Turn on exterior lights to welcome trick-or-treaters.
- Remove toys and other items from sidewalks and yard.
- Have your Neighborhood Watch or citizen's group assist in patrolling

## Safe Landings

Falls are the leading cause of home injuries and injury-related deaths in the United States, but only 25percent of adults have taken steps to prevent them from occurring in their homes, according to



research by the [Home Safety Council \(HSC\)](#). Adults over age 65 and children under age 5 are especially vulnerable to falls. Older adults experience an average of 4,700 fall-related deaths and 1.5 million nonfatal fall injuries each year, while falls are the leading cause of nonfatal home injury for children up to age 14.

The HSC offers several tips to secure your home against home-related injury .

- Install a banister or hand-rail along stairways that extends the full length of the stairs.
- Make sure porches, hallways and stairwells are well-lit.
- Use nightlights to help light hallways, stairwells and bathrooms during nighttime hours.
- Keep stairs, landings and floors clear of clutter, and tuck telephone and electrical cords out of the way.
- Use child safety gates to secure the top and bottom of stairs, and make sure toys and games are not left on

the neighborhood.

- Ask for volunteers to act as crossing guards.
- If you operate a motor vehicle, drive slowly and be observant for children.
- Report suspicious activity or criminal activity to police.

## Tips for Your Trick-or-Treaters

- Older children should travel with friends.
- Never alone.
- Set time limits for children to trick-or-treat.
- Map out a safe route.
- No shortcuts.
- Tell children not to enter a stranger's house.
- Have children trick-or-treat while it's still light outside.
- If it is dark, have them carry a flashlight.
- Tell your children not to eat treats until they return home and have you inspect them first.
- Allow children to eat only unopened candies and in original wrappers.

## Alternative Celebrations

- Halloween costume parties with treats, games, contests, haunted houses, etc. at:
  - Schools
  - Fire stations
  - Libraries
  - Shopping centers/malls

source: [Houston Police Department](#)

### \* DID YOU KNOW

The Home Safety Council provides an online interactive resource, [MySafeHome.org](#), which identifies the most common causes of home injuries. Visitors can tour a home room-by-room to learn various safety tips to protect their

steps or landings.

- In the bathroom, install grab bars in the bathtub or shower stall.
- Use a non-slip mat or safety strips in the bathtub. If you use a bath mat on the floor, choose one that has a non-skid bottom.
- Keep the floor clean and dry. Promptly clean up any grease, water or other spills.

## Creepy Crawlers

As temperatures begin to fall, your home can become a safe haven for insects and rodents. Like people, pests seek shelter from the elements too. Experts at the National Pest Management Association suggest yard maintenance is the simplest, most inexpensive way to protect your home from unwanted pests.

Start by reducing the number of access routes into your home by collecting fallen leaves, cleaning out gutters, keeping shrubs neat and trimmed, cutting back tree branches from the roof, and removing leaves and grass clippings from around the foundation of the house. Next, stack firewood away from the house and make sure screens are on all windows and doors to prevent pests from entering into the home.



### fast fact >> >> >> >> >> >>

The average home is responsible for producing more air pollution than the average car. Much of the energy we use in our homes is generated by power plants, which burn fossil fuel to power

loved ones from home-related injuries. our electrical items and appliances.

Source: [Eartheasy.com](http://Eartheasy.com)



## Saved by the Sprinkler

**F**ire can destroy a home and everything in it within minutes. While smoke detectors are essential for fire safety, many homeowners are choosing to install sprinklers in their homes as a way to contain fires and limit potential damage. According to the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition,



90 percent of home fires can be contained by just one sprinkler, and by using them in addition to smoke detectors, the risk of death in a home fire is reduced by 82 percent. Also, 62 percent of U.S. homeowners believe that a fire sprinkler system can increase a home's value, according to a Harris Interactive poll. A home sprinkler system can cost as little as \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot to install. Modern systems no longer look like bulky industrial sprinklers; they can be mounted flush against walls and ceilings to blend in with any decor, and they require very little maintenance. Sprinklers are temperature sensitive, so they won't go off simply due to the presence of smoke, cooking vapors or steam. Only the sprinkler closest to the fire activates, so you don't need to worry about water damage in other areas of your home.

Source: [Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition](http://HomeFireSprinklerCoalition.com)

## Greener Pastures

The grass is always greener on the other side, right? Well, next year it doesn't have to be. Lawn and garden supplier Scotts Company offers tips to help you protect your lawn through the winter months and keep it looking lush and beautiful next summer.

- Re-seed any grass that has been hurt by summer heat and drought. Keep the new seed and grass watered, and don't do any weed control until after the fourth watering.
- Help keep



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Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home?

Please mention my name.

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If you are currently working with another real estate agent or broker, it is not a solicitation for business.

disease and bugs at bay by cutting back old perennials and vegetable gardens. Use the clippings to start a compost pile.

- Instead of raking fallen leaves, run your mower over them two or three times. Leaves left on the lawn during the winter can block sunlight and thin the grass.
- Plant trees and shrubs toward the beginning of the fall season, so there is less shock to the roots and they start growing early in the spring.
- Continue to cut the grass the same

height (2  
to 3  
inches)  
until the  
final cut at  
the  
beginning  
of winter.  
Don't go  
any  
shorter on  
that last  
cut.

