

# How to Have a Safe Halloween in the Workplace



No, Halloween isn't just for kids anymore. Many adults also participate in this holiday. And even some workplaces get into the Halloween spirit, with decorations, costume contests, pumpkin carving contests, etc.

But if you celebrate Halloween in your workplace, make sure that safety doesn't get forgotten in all the frivolity.

## Costumes

Consider whether you should let employees wear costumes on the job. Although costumes might be fine in some workplaces, such as office environments, they may pose serious safety hazards in others, such as on construction sites or in manufacturing plants.

Similarly, costumes might be fine for employees in certain positions, but not others. For instance, a worker shouldn't wear a costume if it could become entangled in machinery. So think long and hard about whether to let any employees wear costumes and if so which employees.

If you *do* permit employees to wear costumes, be sure to set some rules. For example, bar employees from wearing offensive, revealing or otherwise inappropriate costumes that might give rise to complaints. And don't allow employees to accessorize their costumes with weapons, such as guns, swords or knives, which could provoke workplace violence.

In addition, considering barring workers from wearing masks or hoods that could obstruct their vision and lead to trips and falls. And warn employees about wearing capes, gowns and other long garments that may also pose trip-and-fall hazards.

## Pumpkins and Other Decorations

If you hold a pumpkin carving contest in your workplace, make sure that workers know how to avoid getting injured while cutting into a pumpkin. For example, give them these tips.

Pumpkins are often displayed with a candle inside'but that's a bad idea in a workplace. A pumpkin with a lit candle in it can easily get knocked over and cause a fire. Instead, illuminate them with battery-powered or corded lights.

As for other holiday decorations, make sure that they don't create safety hazards, such as by blocking safety signs or access to emergency exits.

### **Holiday Parties**

If your company throws a Halloween party for its employees, be sure to follow the same rules you should follow for any company event, especially if alcohol will be provided or served. And remind employees of the company's expectations as to their behaviour at the party to prevent sexual harassment or other inappropriate conduct.