



# KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Kalamazoo County Community Leaders  
FROM: Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department  
DATE: September 25, 2020  
RE: **Fall Holiday Guidance**

The Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department (KCHCS) is providing the following guidance for the upcoming fall holidays. The public health guidance is based on the current Executive Order 2020-176 that applies to Kalamazoo County and holiday recommendations from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This guidance is subject to change if the State of Michigan or CDC issues additional information.

### **Executive Order 2020-176**

For the purpose of this memorandum, social gatherings or organized events include: carnivals, festivals, live entertainment, activities, haunted house attractions, parties, fundraisers, and trunk or treating events.

Under the current executive order, social gatherings or organized events among persons not part of the same household are permitted provided that organizers and venues ensure that:

1. Persons not part of the same household maintain six feet of distance from one another, including by designing the gathering or event to encourage and maintain social distancing;
2. If a gathering or event is indoors, it does not exceed 10 people; and
3. If a gathering or event is outdoors, it does not exceed 100 people.

The above guidance applies to workplace gatherings and events (such as meetings and trainings), but does not apply to the incidental gathering of persons in a shared space. If social gatherings and events are held at a restaurant or bar, then those facilities must observe their specific licensing regulations.

### **Fall Holiday Celebrations:**

KCHCS strongly encourages people to celebrate all holidays in a manner that reduces the risk of spreading COVID-19. It is advised that people continue the public health recommendations of washing your hands, wearing a face covering or mask, maintaining six feet from others, staying home if you are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, and getting a flu vaccine. Since some traditional ways in which these holidays are celebrated are not permitted this year, please consider alternatives.

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**HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

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## Religious holidays

Religious holidays such as Yom Kippur, Navratri, and Diwali typically include large gatherings and travel that may put people at increased risk for COVID-19. Before you host a religious holiday celebration, follow the [CDC Considerations for Communities of Faith](#) and the [CDC Holiday Celebrations](#) recommendations.

## Halloween

KCHCS recommends following the guidance released by Michigan Department of Health & Human Services for homeowners, parents and trick-or-treaters (page 5-7). Additionally, the CDC also issued recommendations this week. Please note, the CDC considers trick-or-treating a high-risk activity and offers alternative activities as listed below as well as safety tips if parents and children choose to trick-or-treat.

### *Lower risk activities:*

- 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
- Creating cards for older adults in Long Term Care Facilities to spread Halloween cheer to those socially isolated. KCHCS recommends calling the facility for requirements to follow.
- Donating candy or care package items to troops abroad. KCHCS recommends calling the organizations for requirements to follow.
- 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/online Halloween costume contest or pumpkin carving
- 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
- Having car parades, car contests, or car events for all ages such as:
  - Drive by events or contests where individuals dress up or decorate their vehicles and drive by “judges” that are appropriately physically distanced.
  - Drive through events where individuals remain in their vehicles and drive through an area with Halloween displays.
  - Drive in events where individuals can receive a treat bag (limited to commercially packaged non-perishable treats) or take away item from an organizer while the participants remain in their vehicle.
- Going to Halloween movie nights at drive in theaters.
- Having Halloween themed meals at restaurants.
- Dressing up homes and yards with Halloween themed decorations.

### *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.
- 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:*

*It is the recommendation of CDC to avoid higher risk activities to help prevent the spread of 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

**Dia de los Muertos**

*Lower risk activities:*

- Preparing traditional family recipes for family and neighbors, especially those at [higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19](#), and delivering them in a way that doesn't involve contact with others
- Playing music in your home that your deceased loved ones enjoyed
- Making and decorating masks or making an altar for the deceased
- Setting out pillows and blankets in your home for the deceased
- Joining a virtual get-together celebration

*Moderate risk activities:*

- Having a small group outdoor, open-air parade where people are distanced more than 6 feet apart

- Visiting and decorating graves of loved ones with household members only and keeping more than 6 feet away from others who may be in the area
- Hosting or attending a small dinner with local family and friends outdoors where people are distanced more than 6 feet part
  - Lower your risk by following CDC’s recommendations on [hosting gatherings or cook-outs](#).

*Higher risk activities:*

*It is the recommendation of CDC to avoid higher risk activities to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.*

Attending large indoor celebrations with singing or chanting

- Participating in crowded indoor gatherings or events
- Having a large dinner party with people from different households coming from different geographic locations
- Using alcohol or drugs, which can cloud judgement and increase risky behaviors

**Thanksgiving**

*Lower risk activities:*

- Having a small [dinner](#) with only people who live in your household
- Creating cards for older adults in Long Term Care Facilities to spread Halloween cheer to those socially isolated. KCHCS recommends calling the facility for requirements to follow.
- Donating food to the local food pantry rather than volunteer at a soup kitchen
  - Congregate meal sites remain closed and have modified food distribution to “take-away” meals. Organizations hoping to assist with “take-away” options or “drive-thru” meals should contact their local food pantry, senior center, community center, or other non-profit organizations.
- Preparing traditional family recipes for family and neighbors, especially those at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, and delivering them in a way that doesn’t involve contact with others
- Having a virtual dinner and sharing recipes with friends and family
- Shopping online rather than in person on the day after Thanksgiving or the next Monday
- Watching sports events, parades, and movies from home

*Moderate risk activities:*

- Having a small outdoor [dinner](#) with family and friends who live in your community where people are distanced more than six feet part.
  - Lower your risk by following CDC’s recommendations on [hosting gatherings or cook-outs](#).
- 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
- Attending a small outdoor sports events with safety precautions in place

*Higher risk activities:*

*It is the recommendation of CDC to avoid higher risk activities to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.*

Going shopping in crowded stores just before, on, or after Thanksgiving

- Participating or being a spectator at a crowded race
- Attending crowded parades
- Using [alcohol or drugs](#), which can cloud judgement and increase risky behaviors
- Attending large indoor gatherings with people from outside of your household

# THE ONLY THING SCARY ABOUT HALLOWEEN SHOULD BE THE COSTUMES

## STAY SAFE!

The way we celebrate Halloween in Michigan will be different this year due to COVID 19. There are still many ways to celebrate safely. Here are some tips to help Michiganders stay safe this year.

Make sure to also check on and follow guidance or regulations released by the local health department.

## HOMEOWNERS

- Do not hand out candy if you are sick.
- Wear a face mask covering BOTH your mouth and nose.
- Use duct tape to mark 6 foot lines in front of your home and leading to driveway/front door.
- Position a distribution table between yourself and trick or treaters.
- Distribute candy on disinfected table to eliminate direct contact.
- Wash hands often.
- Consider handing out candy in an open space where distancing is possible, rather than from the front door.
- Consider a neighborhood costume parade, it is an easy way to keep safe space between children.

## PARENTS AND TRICK-OR-TREATERS

- Share with your children that this year may be different than last, but let them know some of the new ways you plan to celebrate and still have lots of fun.
- Stay home if sick.
- Talk with your children about safety and social distancing guidelines and expectations. Keep a 6 foot distance from others not in your family group.
- Trick or treat with the people you live with.
- Participate in one way trick or treating and guide children to stay to the right to ensure social distancing.
- Avoid congregating in groups around houses.
- Carry a flashlight at night and ensure your children have reflective clothing.
- Wear a face mask covering BOTH your mouth and nose
  - A costume mask (such as for Halloween) is not a substitute for a cloth mask.
  - Do not wear a costume mask over a protective cloth mask if wearing both causes difficulty breathing. Instead, consider using a Halloween themed cloth mask.
- Only go to houses with safety measures in place.
- Inspect candy.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol, especially before eating or after coughing/sneezing, and as soon as you return home.
- Check out [halloween2020.org](https://halloween2020.org) to find exciting activities and ways to celebrate Halloween this year based on levels of COVID risks in your area.

## HERE ARE SOME IDEAS FOR SAFE HALLOWEEN GATHERINGS:

- Consider refraining from Halloween gatherings this year or use an online meeting platform to have a virtual party instead.
- If you choose to have a gathering:
  - Only have a few people over to limit the possibility of crowding. Indoor gatherings over 10 people are prohibited by [EO 2020 176](#).
  - Have all food and party favors set out individually to prevent cross contamination. (Avoid buffet style or shared food and drinks.)
  - Make sure there are plenty of areas with hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
  - Stay 6 feet away from others.
  - Wear a fun face mask, instead of a costume mask.

State of Michigan COVID 19 Website

[Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Halloween Guidance:

[CDC.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays](https://CDC.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays)

Partnership for a Safe Halloween: [Halloween2020.org](https://Halloween2020.org)

