



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

September 25, 2020

Guidance for Safer Halloween and Dia de los Muertos Celebrations during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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SUMMARY

This guidance outlines safer ways to celebrate Halloween and Dia de los Muertos during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 virus continues to circulate in communities within Marin County causing severe illness, hospitalizations and deaths among our residents. Individuals can spread COVID-19 even without symptoms. While the primary means of spread involves droplets created by coughing, sneezing and talking, aerosols caused by normal breathing and virus particles on hard surfaces can also spread COVID-19.

This ongoing risk requires everyone to follow necessary precautions. Reducing close contact with individuals outside your household, wearing masks, practicing hand hygiene, and staying home when not feeling well are all important measures to slow the spread

Many traditional holiday activities promote congregating and mixing of households, which increase the risk of transmitting COVID-19. For this reason, Marin County Public Health recommends that you choose a safer alternative way to celebrate Halloween and Dia de los Muertos and strongly discourages trick-or-treating. It is important to plan early and identify safer options.

SAFER ALTERNATIVES FOR HALLOWEEN

The safest way to celebrate Halloween is with people in the same household or to celebrate virtually. Some specific alternatives that are low risk include:

- Creating a haunted house or candy scavenger hunt in your home for members of your household, rather than going house-to-house.
- Having a scary movie night or Halloween-themed activities (pumpkin carving, face painting, creating homemade pumpkin spice hand sanitizer) at home.
- Participating in online parties or contests (e.g., costume or pumpkin carving).

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- Dressing up homes and yards with Halloween themed decorations.
- Participate in a Halloween scavenger hunt in your neighborhood, and look for Halloween -related objects (e.g. witches, spiderwebs, black cats) while maintaining social distance from people from outside your household.
 - Car parades that comply with public health guidance, including: Drive-by events or contests where individuals dress up or decorate their vehicles.
 - 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(s) from an organizer while the participants remain in their vehicle.
- Halloween movie nights at drive-in theaters (must comply with the [state drive-in movie theater guidance](#)).
- Halloween themed meals at outdoor restaurants (must comply with the [state restaurant guidance](#)).
- Halloween themed art installations at an outdoor museum (must comply with the [state museum guidance](#))
- Seasonal outdoor activity, such as a pumpkin patch, where use of masks and hand sanitizer is enforced, and people are able to maintain social distancing.

SAFER ALTERNATIVES FOR DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

The safest way to celebrate Dia de los Muertos is to spend time with people in the same household or to celebrate virtually. Some specific alternatives that are low risk include:

- Working with members of your household to decorate your home with images and objects to honor your deceased loved ones.
- Preparing traditional family recipes with members of your household.
- 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
- 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

HIGHER RISK ACTIVITIES THAT ARE STRONGLY DISCOURAGED

Avoid these higher risk activities to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19:

- Door to door trick-or-treating is not recommended because it can be very difficult to maintain proper social distancing on porches and at front doors, ensure that everyone answering or coming to the door is

appropriately masked to prevent disease spread, and it involves touching high contact surfaces such as doorbells and candy bowls.

- “Trunk or treating” where children go from car to car instead of door to door to receive treats is also not recommended, since it is difficult to avoid crowding and sharing food.
- Alcohol and drug use increases vulnerability to COVID-19 infection because it impairs judgement to properly uphold the personal protection measures listed below.

HIGHER RISK ACTIVITIES THAT ARE NOT PERMITTED

Do not participate in the following activities, which are prohibited by local or state public health orders.

- Halloween gatherings, Dia de los Muertos celebrations, events or parties with non-household members are not permitted unless they are part of your household social bubble of 12 individuals or less, are conducted outdoors, and are otherwise in compliance with the social distancing health order
- Carnivals, festivals, live entertainment, and haunted house attractions are not allowed.
- Going on hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household
- Having a large dinner party with people from different households coming from different geographic locations
- Attending large indoor celebrations with singing or chanting

PERSONAL PROTECTION MEASURES:

Regardless of how you choose to celebrate Halloween or Dia de los Muertos it is important to keep the following in mind:

1. **Face Coverings:** Wear a cloth face covering that securely covers nose and mouth to prevent disease spread when outside your home and around others that are not part of your household. Please note plastic, rubber, vinyl, and other Halloween costume masks are not acceptable substitute for cloth face-coverings to prevent COVID-19 spread.
2. **Practice Physical Distancing:** Stay at least 6 feet away (3 or more adult steps) from all other people who are not part of your own household, especially when talking, eating, drinking and singing.
3. **Outdoors is safer:** Avoid confined spaces, especially indoors.
4. **Good Hygiene:** Wash or sanitize your hands often. Clean high touch items regularly.
5. **Minimize Mixing:** Plan activities to limit mixing between different households. Currently, gatherings of more than 12 people are prohibited in California. You are permitted to gather with 12 people in accordance with Marin County’s social bubble guidance. That means on Halloween or Dia de los Muertos, if you are spending time with others, you must stick with a maximum of 12 people and not mingle with others.
6. **Stay Home If You Are Sick or You are in a High Risk Group:** If you are sick, or you have been in contact with someone who has been

diagnosed with COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19 please stay home and away from others. People at higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 (such as older adults, people with chronic medical conditions) are strongly urged to stay home.

PLEASE RESPECT YOUR NEIGHBORS AND YOUR COMMUNITY

Everyone is navigating the COVID-19 pandemic to the best of their abilities and has different comfort levels about what is safe to do. Some of your neighbors may be more restrictive than these guidelines and we ask that you respect your neighbor's wishes and concerns.

Sincerely,

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Public Health Officer

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