



VILLAGE OF OXFORD
Incorporated 1808
Box 866
Oxford, New York 13830

Village Hall–

DATE: September 28, 2020

TO: Board of Trustees
Village Clerk – Shelly Marks

FROM: T.M. Stark

RE: HALLOWEEN – COVID-19 GUIDELINES

This recommends the Village adopt local Halloween 2020 guidelines. The objective of the guidelines are to help ensure public safety and Health during the weekend of Halloween which falls on Saturday October 31, this year. The guidelines will help local village residents, organizations, and institutions to better plan and implement this year's Halloween activities within the Village. Additionally, the Village will publish and distribute the guidelines to local media, post on Village Web site, and post in downtown area by October 5th.

BACKGROUND

On September 15, 2020 Governor Andrew Cuomo offered some hope about All Hallows Eve during a Tuesday interview with News 12 Long Island, in which he indicated he would not ban door-to-door trick-or-treating. "I don't think that's appropriate," Cuomo said when asked if he would ban trick-or-treating out of an abundance of caution during the pandemic. "You have neighbors – if you want to go knock on your neighbor's door, God bless you, and I'm not going to tell you not to." This appears to be a reprieve for the many young, costumed ghouls and goblins across New York who take to the streets every Oct. 31 in search of sweet treats. The governor, however, did not rule out offering some guidelines on safe trick-or-treating as Halloween approaches. Additionally, Large-scale, indoor Halloween parties are likely to remain off-limits as well due to ongoing capacity restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the crisis began on March 1, COVID-19 sickened more than 450,000 New York residents, killing more than 20,000 of them. The communicability of the virus, combined with capacity restrictions imposed to stop the spread, led to cancellations of major holiday gatherings especially in the city — including public parades and festivals. Chenango County has about 250 cases with 7 deaths since March. Absent further detailed guidance from the state or County level, it behooves the Village to provide local guidance utilizing the CDC guidelines locally to help maintain public health and safety as well as avoid confusion and uncertainty as to local Halloween activities in the Village.

The following New guidelines for trick-or-treating on Halloween have been released by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and were published on the CDC website Monday night, Sept. 21. Many traditional Halloween activities can be high-risk for spreading viruses," the CDC said. "There are several safer, alternative ways to participate in Halloween. "If you may have COVID-19 or you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should not participate in in-person Halloween festivities and should not give out candy to trick-or-treaters." The CDC offered and the Village should adopt several alternatives to trick-or-treating, including:

- 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).
- 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.

PROPOSED

VILLAGE OF OXFORD 2020 COVID-19 HALLOWEEN GUIDELINES

Many traditional Halloween activities can be high-risk for spreading viruses. There are several safer, alternative ways to participate in Halloween. If you may have COVID-19 or you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should not participate in in-person Halloween festivities and should not give out candy to trick-or-treaters.

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
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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 does not 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.

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Board should be favorable to Lower and Moderate risk activities within the Village**
2. **Board should not be favorable to any of the activities listed as higher risk**
3. **Board set Saturday October 31st from 5 PM – 7 PM as the hours for Moderate risk one-way trick or treating.** Residences willing to participate should leave a porch or door light on.

NEXT STEPS

Village Board Review
Board Decision
Prepare Media Release
Distribute Media Release

TIMING

September 29th
September 29th
October 2nd
October 5th