



BROCKTON MAYOR URGES CAUTION FOR HALLOWEEN

Mayor Robert F. Sullivan calls for residents to consider skipping traditional trick-or-treating and follow state guidelines to prevent spread of COVID-19

BROCKTON, Mass., Oct. 21, 2020 - Mayor Robert F. Sullivan is calling on Brockton residents to use common sense, avoid large gatherings and follow the new state guidelines to ensure that Halloween trick-or-treating does not result in increased COVID-19 cases.

While some cities have banned trick-or-treating, Mayor Sullivan is calling for parents and residents who choose to participate to be safe by adhering to best practices released by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). Brockton has eclipsed 5,000 COVID-19 cases, and over 290 residents have lost their lives from the virus since March of this year.

The City is currently experiencing a spike in COVID-19 cases and is in the state's "red" category, which is the highest risk designation.

"In light of the COVID-19 struggles in Brockton, as Mayor and as a father of three kids who love to trick-or-treat, I just cannot encourage it this year," Mayor Sullivan said. "While we all want to get back to normal, we remain at high risk in Brockton and we all need to remain vigilant and do our part to stop the spread in order to save lives. We must adhere to proper health standards so that we do not extend the pandemic within our City and put more lives at risk."

Dr. Richard Herman, the City's pandemic consultant, stated, "COVID-19 is on the rise in Brockton. Remember, the virus can easily be spread by an infected individual, even if he or she appears completely healthy and has no symptoms. If you participate in any Halloween activities, wear a mask and keep your distance from others outside of your household."

The Mayor is strongly urging residents to not host or attend indoor Halloween parties or outdoor "block" parties, and to follow the state's safety guidelines. Older adults and anyone with underlying conditions should avoid Halloween events and turn off outdoor lights on Oct. 31 so trick-or-treaters do not approach their door.

Anyone feeling sick or with a fever should not attend any Halloween events, and should get tested immediately and follow state guidelines on quarantine.

Stop the Spread, the Commonwealth's free testing program, is available in Brockton for anybody who is looking to get tested for COVID-19. For more information, please visit the Stop the Spread website, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread#brockton>, to see where and when testing is available.

The Massachusetts DPH and the federal Centers for Disease Control have issued these safety guidelines for those who choose to trick-or-treat:

- Enjoy Halloween **outside** rather than attending indoor events;
- Stay in small groups and maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet from other participants who are not members of the same household;
- Place candy on a platter instead of in a bowl;
- Instead of traditional trick or treating, opt for one-way trick-or-treating with treats placed outside of the home for trick-or-treaters as a "grab and go" while keeping distance from others;
- Consider leaving hand sanitizer by any treats left out for trick-or-treaters to use;
- Wear a face mask or face covering;
- A costume mask is not a substitute for a face mask or face covering. To protect yourself and others, ensure you are wearing a protective face mask or covering instead of or in addition to a costume mask;
- Observe good hand hygiene, including hand washing and use of alcohol-based sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol. Carry hand sanitizer and use it often, especially after coming into contact with frequently touched surfaces and before eating candy; and
- Refrain from touching your face.

The Mayor is also asking residents to consider alternatives to trick-or-treating. Some ideas include:

- Decorate your yard for others to enjoy from their car or while on a socially-distanced walk;
- Hold virtual costume contests or pumpkin carving events; or
- Celebrate with members of your household with a Halloween-themed meal, Halloween movie night, or by preparing a Halloween scavenger hunt.

The DPH urges all Massachusetts residents to avoid:

- Attending crowded costume parties held indoors, or any gatherings that exceed indoor or outdoor gathering limits;
- Going to an indoor haunted house where people may be crowded together and screaming; and
- Going on hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household.

You can learn more at the CDC's Halloween page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html> or at the state Department of Public Health's Halloween page: <https://www.mass.gov/news/halloween-during-covid-1>.