



TO: Mayor Roy D. Buol and City Council Members

FROM: Mary Rose Corrigan, Public Health Specialist

SUBJECT: Halloween and Trick or Treat Proclamation

DATE: October 1, 2020

Introduction

This memorandum submits information and options for determining the status of Trick or Treat, 2020 in the City of Dubuque.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently issued guidelines for celebrating fall holidays, including Halloween. The guidelines should be considered in conjunction with current COVID-19 levels and spread in the community.

Background

Considering various metrics of the current COVID 19 situations in Dubuque, including the overall epi-curve, the 14- day trend line, the 14- day average positivity rate, hospitalization rate,

Lower risk trick or treat 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

Moderate risk trick or treat 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.

If screaming will likely occur, greater distancing is advised. The greater the distance, the lower the risk of spreading a respiratory virus.

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Higher risk trick or treat 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

Using alcohol or drugs, which can cloud judgement and increase risky behaviors

The entire CDC fall holiday recommendations can be found at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html#halloween>

Various communities in Iowa have different approaches to trick or treat as some are allowing it and some are not.

Discussion:

Considering the current level of community spread and the required sustained decrease in the number of new COVID-19 cases, it may take considerable time to affect the positivity rate, the 14 day average positivity rate, the case rate per 100,000 population etc. Another factor to consider is, the fewer trick or treat options available in the area will increase the number of participants and make it more difficult to follow safe public health measures. For instance, if the City of Dubuque does not allow trick or treat, another area community or event sponsoring trick or treat may become overwhelmed.

Also, trick or treat is optional, both for the children and for those residences distributing treats. It is well known that a front light turned on means trick or treaters are welcome and no front light on means that residence is not handing treats.

Trick or treat could be held in a safe manor, if proper public health, distancing, and other mitigation strategies along with the suggestions in the CDC guidance, are required and practiced by those participating. An important consideration is to participate with members of your own household; keep your family together and do not mix or mingle with other families or groups.

The following options or variations thereof may be considered by City Council:

- Do not issue a proclamation allowing trick or treat in any fashion
- Proclaim trick or treat only if public health and mitigation strategies listed under the CDC *moderate* risk activities are required and adhered
- Proclaim trick or treat only if public health and mitigation strategies listed under the CDC *high* risk activities are required and adhered
- Allow trick or treat in the traditional manner without restrictions

Council Action:

Approve one of the above listed options or variation thereof. Also, consideration should be made for reversing the selected proclamation based on public health recommendations and the COVID-19 situation.