

Spooktacular & Safe: Your Guide to safe Trick-or-Treating

As autumn leaves turn and the nights draw in, Halloween is upon us once again! Little ghosts, ghouls, and superheroes across the UK are getting ready to hit the pavements for an evening of trick-or-treating. While it is one of the most exciting nights of the year for children, the combination of dark evenings, busy roads, and flammable fancy dress means safety should always take centre stage. Here is our guide to ensuring your family enjoys a fun, memorable, and above all, safe Halloween.



1. Bright Lights & Big Visions: Costume Safety

Choosing or making a outfit is half the fun of Halloween, but fancy dress costumes carry hidden risks.

- Look for Safety Labels: Always check that costumes carry a legitimate UKCA or CE mark on the label. While this doesn't render clothing fireproof, it ensures the material meets flame-retardant safety standards and will burn significantly slower if an accident occurs.
- Layer Up: Have children wear normal everyday clothes under their costumes. This adds a protective layer against flames and keeps them warm on chilly British nights!
- Ditch the Masks for Road Safety: Full-face masks can restrict a child’s peripheral vision and hearing, making road crossings dangerous. Opt for non-toxic face paint instead.
- Be Seen in the Dark: With the clocks going back, darkness falls quickly. Attach reflective tape to dark costumes, give children glow sticks, or have them carry a small torch so drivers can easily spot them.

2. Navigating the Neighbourhood: Doorstep Etiquette & Rules

Not everyone in your local community takes part in Halloween, and respecting neighbours keeps the event positive for everyone.

Do's 🎃	Don'ts 🚫
Look for pumpkins/decorations: Only knock on doors that display a carved pumpkin, decorations, or a trick-or-treating poster.	Knock on dark houses: If a house is dark or displays a "No Trick-or-Treaters" poster, respect their privacy and skip it.
Stick to well-lit areas: Stay on main, familiar streets with functional streetlights.	Take quiet shortcuts: Avoid unlit alleys, dark parks, or cutting through private gardens.

Supervise young children: Police and child safety groups recommend that under-12s are always accompanied by a responsible adult.

Enter a stranger's house: Remind children never to cross a threshold into a house, regardless of the invitation.

A Note on Teenagers: If older children or teenagers are going out independently, agree on a set pre-planned route, set a strict curfew, and make sure they stay together in a group with fully charged mobile phones. Remind them that pranks involving flour, eggs, or property damage are classified by UK police forces as anti-social behaviour.

3. Fire Prevention: Swap Real Flames for LEDs

Decorated pathways and pumpkin-lined driveways look atmospheric, but trailing skirts and flowing capes near naked flames pose a real hazard.

- Use LED Tea Lights: Replace real wax candles inside Jack-o'-lanterns with battery-operated LED tealights. (*Safety tip: ensure battery compartments are securely screwed shut to keep button batteries away from toddlers*).
- Teach 'Stop, Drop, and Roll': In case clothing does catch fire, practice the "Stop, Drop, and Roll" technique with kids ahead of time so they know how to react calmly.

4. Treat Inspection & Food Allergies

The haul at the end of the night is every child's favourite part, but a quick check before tucking in is essential:

- Inspect Sweets at Home: Save sweet-eating until you get back home under good lighting. Discard any unwrapped or homemade treats from strangers.
- Choking Hazards: Hard candies, lollipops, and mini chocolates can present choking hazards for toddlers, especially when walking.
- The Teal Pumpkin Project: If you host trick-or-treaters at your door, consider putting a teal pumpkin outside. This universally signifies that you offer non-food treats (like stickers, glow bracelets, or small toys) for children with severe food allergies!

Thoughts for Drivers & Residents

If you are driving on Halloween evening between 5:00 PM and 9:00 PM, please slow down significantly in residential streets. Excited trick-or-treaters can occasionally step off pavements unexpectedly.

For residents who prefer a quiet evening, printing a simple "No Trick-or-Treaters Please" sign and placing it in your window or door is the best way to ensure an undisturbed night.

Have a spooky, safe, and happy Halloween!



The Bolton Hate Crime Survey is Still Open – Every Voice Matters!

Bolton Neighbourhood Watch is reaching out to residents across the borough with an important reminder: our **Hate Crime – Community Experience and Reporting Survey** is still open, and **we need to hear from EVERYONE**.

Whether you have personally experienced or witnessed a hate incident, or simply hold views on how safety and equality should be handled in our town, your input is vital.

Why Your Input is Crucial

Our message is simple: We all have a part to play in building safer, more inclusive communities where everyone feels respected, supported, and confident that their concerns will be taken seriously.

Please do not assume that someone else's perspective will match yours. Everyone's lived experiences, background, and concerns are unique. To build a truly accurate picture across all parts of Bolton, we need responses from people of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, and personal circumstances—including those who don't usually fill out surveys!

What the Survey Covers

Your feedback will help us, the police, local authorities, and community partners understand:

- **Awareness:** How well people understand hate crime and what it involves.
- **Personal Experiences:** Whether residents feel they have experienced hate-related incidents.
- **Reporting Barriers:** Why incidents are or aren't reported, and what stops people from coming forward.
- **Support & Outcomes:** Whether victims feel listened to, supported, and updated when a case is closed.
- **Actionable Steps:** What local partners can do to improve confidence in reporting and victim support.

 **100% Anonymous & Confidential:** No personal data is collected. Please do not include names, addresses, or identifying details in any free-text boxes.

Have Your Say Today

It takes just a few minutes to make a lasting impact on community safety in Bolton.

 **[Click Here to Complete the Survey](https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/uzV1ss1ZCS)** (<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/uzV1ss1ZCS>)

 **Deadline:** The survey closes at **midnight on Tuesday 10 November 2026**.

Help Us Spread the Word!

To ensure every corner of Bolton is represented, please share the survey link with your:

-  **Family and friends**
-  **Neighbours and local street groups**
-  **Work colleagues and professional networks**
-  **Social media contacts** (Facebook groups, WhatsApp chats, Nextdoor, etc.)

What Happens Next?

Bolton Neighbourhood Watch is a community-led organisation working to create safer, stronger, and more connected neighbourhoods.

The findings from this survey will be published in our monthly newsletter and shared with local partners to help informed discussions and directly support the continued development of the Bolton Hate Crime Action Plan.

No Place For Hate – Let's Make a Difference Together

Hate crime affects individuals, families, and whole communities. By taking part and sharing your views, you are directly contributing to a safer, more inclusive Bolton.

Thank you for your time, your support, and your commitment to our community.

Bonfire Night & Firework Safety: Essential Rules & The Law

Bonfire Night (5th November) is a beloved UK tradition, but with fireworks and open fires comes a high risk of injury and property damage if safety guidelines and legal restrictions aren't followed carefully.

Below is your complete guide to staying safe and staying on the right side of the law during the fireworks season.

1. Fireworks and UK Law: What You Need to Know

Permitted Hours (Curfew)

- **Standard Rule:** It is illegal to set off fireworks in the UK between 11:00 PM and 7:00 AM.
- **Bonfire Night Exception:** On 5th November, the cut-off time is extended to Midnight.
- *(Other extended cut-offs include New Year's Eve, Diwali, and Chinese New Year, which are extended until 1:00 AM).*

Age & Purchase Restrictions

- **Buying Fireworks:** You must be 18 or older to buy or carry adult fireworks (Category F2 and F3).
- **Seasonal Sales Windows:** Registered retailers can only sell fireworks for private use between 15th October and 10th November (as well as around Christmas/New Year, Diwali, and Chinese New Year). Year-round purchases can only be made from specially licensed shops.

Where You Can & Cannot Use Them

- **Public Spaces:** It is a criminal offence to set off or throw fireworks (including sparklers) in a street, highway, park, or public space.
- **Private Land:** Fireworks must only be let off on private property (e.g., your garden) with the landowner's permission.

Penalties: Setting off fireworks during curfew hours or misusing them in public can lead to an on-the-spot fine, unlimited court fines, or up to 6 months in prison.

2. The Firework Code: Safe Handling

If you are hosting a private display in your garden, always follow the British standard guidelines:

- **Buy Safe:** Only buy fireworks marked with a CE or UKCA safety mark.
- **Follow Distance Guidelines:**
 - Category F2 fireworks require a minimum spectator distance of 8 metres.
 - Category F3 fireworks require a minimum distance of 25 metres.
- **Lighting Fireworks:** Light fireworks at arm's length using a taper and step back immediately. Never go back to a lit firework, even if it hasn't gone off.
- **Keep Alcohol Separate:** The person setting off the display should refrain from drinking alcohol.
- **Disposal:** Douse spent fireworks in water before putting them in the bin overnight.

3. Sparkler Safety

Sparklers burn at temperatures up to 2,000°C—hot enough to melt metal!

- Never give sparklers to children under 5 years old.
- Always wear gloves when holding a sparkler.
- Hold sparklers at arm's length and light them one at a time.
- Drop used sparklers hot-end-first into a bucket of water or sand immediately.

4. Bonfire Safety Rules

- **Build Away from Risk:** Place your bonfire well clear of houses, sheds, fences, trees, overhead cables, and parked cars.
- **Check for Wildlife:** Before lighting, check the base of the bonfire with a torch for sleeping hedgehogs, pets, or small animals.
- **Never Use Accelerants:** Avoid using petrol, paraffin, or methylated spirits to light a fire—this can cause dangerous flash fires.
- **Burn Only Clean Wood:** Do not burn household waste, plastics, rubber, or painted/treated timber, as this generates toxic fumes and is illegal.
- **Douse it Completely:** Keep a hose or buckets of water nearby and pour water over embers before leaving the fire unattended.

5. Caring for Pets & Neighbours

- **Keep Pets Indoors:** Keep cats and dogs inside with doors, windows, and cat flaps secured. Draw curtains and turn on the TV or radio to mask the noise.
- **Inform Neighbours:** Give elderly neighbours and pet owners in your area a quick heads-up before lighting a display so they can prepare.

How to Report the Misuse of Fireworks

If fireworks are being used dangerously, illegally, or as a form of anti-social behaviour, here is how you can report it depending on the severity of the situation:

1. When to Call 999 (Immediate Emergency)

Call **999** immediately if:

- Fireworks are being used as weapons or thrown at people, vehicles, houses, or emergency workers.
- There is an immediate threat to life, severe injury (e.g., severe burns), or a active fire spreading to property.
- A serious crime or dangerous anti-social behaviour is happening right now.

2. Reporting Non-Emergency Incidents to Police

If fireworks are being set off outside legal hours (e.g., after 11:00 PM on standard nights or after Midnight on 5th November) or used in a public street/park, but there is no immediate danger to life:

- **Online Reporting:** Submit a report via the [Greater Manchester Police \(GMP\) Anti-Social Behaviour Portal](https://www.gmp.police.uk/ro/report/asb/asb-v3/report-antisocial-behaviour/) (https://www.gmp.police.uk/ro/report/asb/asb-v3/report-antisocial-behaviour/) or use their 24/7 Live Chat service.
- **Phone:** Call **101** (the non-emergency police number).
- **Textphone / Accessibility:** If you have a hearing or speech impairment, call **18001 101**.

3. Reporting Illegal Sales & Underage Supply

If you suspect a local shop is selling fireworks illegally (e.g., selling to under-18s, selling outside permitted seasonal windows, or selling unapproved/dangerous fireworks):

- **Trading Standards:** Contact Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0808 223 1133** to pass details onto your local council's Trading Standards team.

4. Reporting Anonymously

If you have information about people repeatedly storing or throwing illegal fireworks but wish to remain completely anonymous:

- **Crimestoppers:** Call **0800 555 111** or submit an anonymous online form at crimestoppers-uk.org.

What Information to Provide:

When reporting firework misuse, try to gather and provide:

1. **Exact Location:** Street name, nearby landmarks, or postcode.
2. **Time and Frequency:** Whether it is an ongoing issue or a one-off event.
3. **Descriptions:** Details of the individuals involved, their direction of travel, or vehicle registration numbers if relevant.



The winners in the national Neighbourhood Watch Volunteer Recognition awards were announced at the Neighbourhood Watch conference this month.

Congratulations to our Area Lead Chris, who was runner up in the Crime Prevention category. An excellent achievement in a very competitive category, and highlights that the work our volunteers do in their communities is recognised and appreciated.

More information on the awards can be found at <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/volunteerawards>

Donating to **Bolton Neighbourhood Watch** and supporting our initiatives—whether through platforms like *Buy Me a Coffee* or by purchasing official resources and gift cards from the *Neighbourhood Watch Shop*—directly empowers local volunteers who work tirelessly to keep communities safe, connected, and resilient.

Here is why supporting us matters so much:

1. Empowering Dedicated Local Volunteers

Bolton Neighbourhood Watch is an independent organization driven entirely by volunteers who give up their own time to look out for others. Donations help cover the day-to-day administrative costs, communication tools, and resources these volunteers need to coordinate local schemes, respond to community concerns, and run safety campaigns.

2. Driving Crime Prevention & Community Safety

Local groups provide vital education on home security, vehicle protection, and seasonal safety (such as darker nights campaigns and anti-social behaviour warnings around events like Halloween and Bonfire Night). Financial support ensures they can continue distributing critical safety advice, distributing window stickers, and setting up visible deterrents like street and wheelie bin signs that help deter opportunistic crime.

3. Fostering Community Resilience and Connectedness

Neighbourhood Watch is about much more than just crime statistics—it builds cohesive, supportive communities where neighbours look out for one another. Funding helps establish new schemes (from

street-level groups to local parks), combats social isolation, and ensures vulnerable residents feel supported and connected.

How You Can Support:

- **Make a Direct Contribution:** You can fuel our ongoing grassroots efforts via their [Buy Me a Coffee page](https://buymeacoffee.com/boltonneighbourhoodwatch). (<https://buymeacoffee.com/boltonneighbourhoodwatch>)
- **Equip Your Neighbourhood:** Visit the [Neighbourhood Watch Shop](https://nwnshop.myshopify.com/) (<https://nwnshop.myshopify.com/>) to purchase official signage, security markers, and awareness materials, or grab a [Shop Gift Card](#) to help a local coordinator get a new scheme off the ground.
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DONATING TO BOLTON NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Supporting our initiatives empowers local volunteers who work tirelessly to keep communities safe, connected, resilient and resilience

Empower Volunteers

Prevent Crime

Build Stronger Communities

Donate: buymeacoffee.com/boltonneighbourhoodwatch Shop: nwnshop.myshopify.com | Gift Cards Available

Join the Movement: Sign Up for Neighbourhood Watch Today!

Keeping Bolton safe doesn't stop at just one night—it's a year-round commitment driven by community cooperation. If you want to play an active role in protecting your street, staying informed, and building a more resilient neighbourhood, now is the time to get involved.

- **Sign Up for Local Schemes:** Register your details with the national network via the [Neighbourhood Watch Join Page](https://members.ourwatchmember.org.uk/Join) (<https://members.ourwatchmember.org.uk/Join>) to become part of your local scheme and connect directly with coordinators in your area.
- **Stay in the Loop with GMP:** By joining, you can also plug straight into Greater Manchester Police's (GMP) *Bee In The Loop* messaging service, receiving crime updates, local police alerts, and crime prevention advice tailored directly to your neighbourhood.

Don't wait for an incident to happen on your doorstep—sign up today, look out for your neighbours, and help make Bolton a safer place for everyone to live.

One Community - One Messaging System



Neighbourhood Watch

