Halloween can be a wicked good time for the whole family in Mt. Juliet as residents and children swamp the neighborhoods in creative costumes racing to see who can get the most candy.

However, safety must be a top priority for parents and children. Amongst the spooky fun, it is important to make sure everyone stays safe and accounted for as they lurk to trick-or-treating. The Mt. Juliet Police Department is significantly increasing patrol officers and their presence in neighborhoods during the witching hours, but they need the help of residents so Mt. Juliet's streets can be as safe as possible. Any unsafe mischief or driving behavior should immediately be reported to the police department so it can be stopped.

Trick-or-treating will be observed in Mt. Juliet on Wednesday, Oct. 31. The Mt. Juliet Police Department recommends trick-or-treating to start at 5 p.m. and to stop by 10 p.m.

Parents can help by ensuring children are prepared for a safe Halloween. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children are four times more likely to be in a fatal pedestrian accident on Halloween than any other night of the year. There are several reasons why children are more likely to be hurt in pedestrian accidents, which include:

1. They often choose to take the shortest route, which may mean darting out between parked cars rather than take the safer route of crossing at corners.

2. They're poor at evaluating potential traffic threats.

3. They're more likely to disregard their peripheral vision and are less attentive of their street

surroundings.

4. They have a tendency to believe they're indestructible and are more likely to take risks.

5. They need to be told that some people driving cars will not slow down for them.

6. They can't cross streets as rapidly as adults.

7. They may be distracted by other children's costumes, behaviors, and home decorations.

In addition, to Mt. Juliet Police Department's proactive patrols in the neighborhoods, they will also be out in force conducting sex offender compliance checks on Halloween. Under Tennessee law, any sex offender on parole or probation may not participate in any Halloween activity involving children. This would include leaving a porch light on, answering the door, or distributing candy.

There are currently 12 registered sex offenderS living in the city limits of Mt. Juliet, and parents may access the Tennessee Sex Offender Registry at the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's website at http://www.tbi.tn.gov/ .

From everyone at Mt. Juliet Police, we wish you a safe Halloween. The department can be contacted at (615) 754-2550 (non-emergency) or 911 (emergency) to report any problems, observations, or safety concerns.

A list of Halloween Health and Safety Tips can be viewed here: http://www.cdc.gov/family/halloween.