



# PUNTA GORDA POLICE

"A STATE ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY"

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## MEDIA RELEASE October 28, 2015



### Halloween Night in the City of Punta Gorda Historic District

As Halloween night approaches, the City of Punta Gorda is preparing for the deluge of children and parents who annually make their trek to the Punta Gorda area for candy, and of course, for a scare or two. This year, as in years past, it is critical that the public take the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of the thousands of residents who visit the Historic District on this night each year. Beginning at 6:00 p.m., a significant contingent of Punta Gorda Police and Fire personnel will be on hand for the event.

On Halloween night (Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup>), all members of the public will be required to observe a **speed limit of 15 miles per hour** within the confines of the Historic District festivities. This speed limit will be strictly enforced. Generally, this area includes the area from Shreve Street to Cross Street (US 41 Southbound), and Olympia Avenue to Retta Esplanade. Punta Gorda Police will have a heavy uniformed police presence in this area with the availability of marked police patrols as well as foot patrols, police bicycles, the Polaris all-terrain vehicle, and golf carts. The Community Services Section will have the interactive trailer set up in Gilchrist Park should attendees need police assistance. Punta Gorda Fire officials will also be patrolling the event with their Medics on Bikes and will have apparatus and personnel prepared to provide medical attention should the need arise on Harvey Street across from the City Hall annex. A number of police volunteers will also be manning intersections for traffic control to assist pedestrians in crossing streets safely. **Motorists should be particularly alert for children veering from sidewalks into traffic, particularly since many children are wearing dark-colored clothing.** The Police Department is also asking that thru-traffic consider alternative routes due to the high volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

#### CITY SEXUAL OFFENDERS

The City of Punta Gorda currently has one registered sexual offender who resides within the municipal city limits. To enhance the safety of holiday revelers, members of the Punta Gorda Police Department will personally visit this offender and remind him of the restrictions surrounding his status and encourage him to take measures that clearly indicate to passers-by that no candy will be available at his residence. He will also be periodically checked upon throughout the night to ensure he is not receiving trick-or-treaters. Below is information on that sex offender with his respective address. As this information occasionally changes, information concerning City Sex Offenders (including photos) can be obtained at [www.puntagordapolice.com](http://www.puntagordapolice.com).

Offender	Address	Status	Assigned Officer
Behling, Matthew	513 East Henry Street	Offender	PFC Terry Chow

## Safe Halloween Tips for Parents

### Make sure your kids dress up safely

- Make sure an adult accompanies children at all times.
- Check that the costumes are flame-retardant so the little ones aren't in danger near burning jack-o-lanterns and other fire hazards.
- Keep costumes short to prevent trips, falls, and other bumps in the night.
- Try make-up instead of a mask. Masks can be hot and uncomfortable and, more importantly, they can obstruct a child's vision -- a dangerous thing when kids are crossing streets and going up and down steps.
- Make sure kids wear light colors, carry a light, wear a blinking light, or put reflective tape on their costumes.

### Make trick-or-treating trouble free

- Trick-or-treaters should always be in groups. Parents should accompany young children.
- Make sure older kids trick-or-treat with friends. Together, map out a safe route so parents know where they'll be. Tell them to stop only at familiar homes where the outside lights are on.
- Try to get your kids to trick-or-treat while it's still light out. If it's dark, make sure someone has a flashlight and pick well-lit streets.
- Make sure kids know not to enter strange houses or strangers' cars.

### Treats

- Kids need to know not to eat their treats until they get home. One way to keep trick-or-treaters from digging in while they're still out is to feed them a meal or a snack beforehand.
- Check out all treats at home in a well-lighted place.
- A better way to check treats is at one of the local hospitals – they will x-ray the goodies for *free*.
- What to eat? Only unopened candies and other treats that are in original wrappers. Don't forget to inspect fruit and homemade goodies for anything suspicious. By all means, remind kids not to eat everything at once or they'll be feeling pretty ghoulish for awhile!

## Tips for Trick-or-Treaters

Parents, please consider discussing the following points with your Trick-or-Treaters.

- 👤 Trick-or-Treat with family or friends, don't go alone.
- 👤 Use make-up instead of a mask so you can see.
- 👤 Wear light-colored clothing or costumes.
- 👤 Make a map of your trick-or-treat route for you and your parents.
- 👤 Carry a flashlight or light stick, wear a flashing light, or both.
- 👤 Always keep a safe distance between you and moving cars.
- 👤 Only cross streets at intersections, and listen to traffic control officers
- 👤 Be respectful of other people and their property.
- 👤 Stop only at well-lit houses.
- 👤 Have a parent check all treats before you eat them.
- 👤 Use sidewalks
- 👤 Stop, look, and listen at corners.

- 👤 Walk - don't run.
- 👤 Don't go between parked cars and crisscross back and forth across streets or into traffic.
- 👤 Don't go inside a stranger's house, **no matter what anyone says.**
- 👤 Don't get inside a stranger's car or go near a stranger's car even if they offer you candy or money
- 👤 Don't carry sharp instruments. And never carry a lighted torch or candle.

### **Tips for Trick or Treat Providers**

Tips for those who will, or will not, be giving out treats.

- Turn on outside lights if you are handing out treats.
- Turn off outside lights if you are not handing out treats. If kids see lights they will come to your door.
- Do not allow kids inside your house. This is for the safety of the kids and yourselves.
- Do not give out edible treats that are unpackaged.
- Report any suspicious activity to the police immediately at (941) 639-4111.

Halloween can be a lot of fun for parents and kids alike – the City of Punta Gorda wishes everyone a safe and happy Halloween.

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