

STUDENT SAFETY

SPOTLIGHT

OCTOBER | 2026



SAFE
KIDS
GRAND FORKS



BUCKLE UP



Altru Health System is proud to serve as the lead agency for Safe Kids Grand Forks. For more information on this and other childhood injury prevention topics, visit safekidsgf.com, call us at 701.780.1489 or email safekid@altru.org.



October is the month when the days start getting noticeably shorter, the costumes come out, and the safety reminders become even more important. As families juggle plans, busier evenings, and cooler-weather routines, it's a perfect time to look closely at child safety seat manuals, visibility for walkers and trick-or-treaters, and simple cooking safety steps that prevent burns and fires. This month, we are highlighting how to use your car seat manual with confidence, Halloween safety and pedestrian visibility, cooking, and bike helmet fit so families can make everyday choices that keep children safer as fall evenings get darker.

Halloween is one of the most exciting nights of the season, but all that excitement means extra planning is needed. Safe Kids offers parents these simple reminders that keep trick-or-treating fun while reducing risk.

For parents and caregivers:

- Choose costumes that allow students to walk safely and who will be visible.
- Use reflective details, glow sticks, or flashlights to improve visibility. Bright little touches make a big difference after dark.
- Walk with an adult or trusted older teen when needed. Supervision still matters, even when students know the route.
- Rather than trick-or-treating door-to-door, consider attending a community help event.
- Stay on sidewalks and cross at designated places. Road safety does not take a holiday.

On the Way—Make Every Trip Safe

A car seat manual is a legal and safety document, not just an instruction booklet. It contains vehicle-specific requirements, weight limits, and expiration dates that are critical for protecting all students riding in child passenger safety restraints.

- **Height and Weight Limits:** Know the transition limits for a harness to a booster seat. Best practice is to keep your student in the seat that fits them to the upper height and weight allowed by the seat manufacturer.
- **Installation Rules:** Learn how to secure the seat using either the vehicle seat belt or the LATCH system. Keep the manual in the seat or vehicle for easy reference.
- **Expiration and History:** Find the expiration date and manufacturing serial number for recalls. Highlight the expiration date to keep safety seats up-to-date.
- **Cleaning Instructions:** Know how to wash the fabric cover without damaging the flame-retardant safety materials. Check the manual for specific instructions.
- **Register the Seat Immediately:** Use the registration card that came with the seat or go on-line to get automatic safety recall alerts. Keep in touch for safety information.
- **Use the QR Codes:** Scan any QR codes in the booklet to watch official installation video walkthroughs.

Safety In Spooky Season

Fall traditions and football games bring new safety awareness, from costumes to candy. Safe Kids Grand Forks joins many community partners to keep safety education a treat. For more information, visit safekidsgf.com/Halloween.

KEEPING KIDS SAFE AT HOME, AT SCHOOL, AT PLAY, AND ON THE WAY!!!

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On The Road—Emergency Preparedness

Fall weather demands smart preparation. If you must hit the road during a severe weather alert, use this quick checklist to stay safe, steady, and in control.

- **Check the Conditions:** Plan long trips around local weather updates; drive only if it is necessary.
- **Inspect Your Vehicle:** Check brakes, fluids, lights, and heater, and look for recalls at [nhtsa.gov/recalls](https://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls).
- **Gear Up Your Tires:** Install reliable winter tires with deep tread. They should be at least 5/32" to 6/32". Below 4/32" significantly reduces traction on ice.
- **Ditch Cruise Control:** Disable cruise control on icy, snowy, or wet roads to prevent dangerous skids.
- **Driver Reminders for Teens:** Don't assume teen drivers remember how to drive on ice. Right with and reteach them and offer helpful tips.

Bike Safety — The Wet Leaf Slide

October can blanket roads and sidewalks in beautiful autumn leaves that look fun to crunch through, but create a hidden traction hazard for riders.

- **The Black Ice of Autumn:** Treat patches of wet, decaying leaves on sidewalks and bike lanes exactly like winter ice; they can wipe out bike tires instantly during sudden or fast turns.
- **Feather the Brakes:** Squeeze your bike brakes gently and early when approaching a leaf-covered patch—slamming on the brakes will cause your rear tire to fishtail.
- **Hidden Pothole Danger:** Avoid riding straight through piles of leaves on the side of the road, as they frequently hide deep potholes or sharp curbs.

On the Water — Cold Shock

As Minnesota temperatures drop, our beautiful lakes and rivers become beautiful hazards. Water doesn't have to be frozen to be dangerous. Water below 70°F (21°C) can trigger a reaction called **Cold Shock**.

Know the 1.10.1 Rule:

- **1 Minute – Catch Your Breath:** Cold shock causes an involuntary gasp, risking inhalation. A life jacket keeps the head above water during this critical first minute of hyperventilation.
- **10 Minutes – Movement:** Cold water quickly drains strength from the body. Swimming or climbing out becomes impossible after 10 minutes.
- **1 Hour – Hypothermia:** In less than an hour, you can lose consciousness. Focus on staying afloat and conserving heat rather than frantic swimming.

At Home — Halloween Hazard Check

Halloween is all about fun, but picking the wrong outfit can lead to fire traps or trip hazards. Smart costume safety includes:

- **Check the Label:** Only choose costumes, masks, or wigs labeled "flame resistant" nylon or polyester.
- **Ditch the Drags:** Avoid flimsy fabrics or costumes with flowing tails or fabric trailing behind you. These can catch fire or trip you up.
- **Keep Accessories Soft:** Ensure any costume props like swords or shields are made of soft, flexible, and brightly colored materials.
- **Paint Not Masks:** Use face paint rather than masks that oftentimes obscure one's vision.
- **Stop the Flame:** Use flameless candles or glow sticks to light pumpkins on front steps or windows

Be Ready - Vehicle Emergency Supplies

Plan long trips carefully. In bad weather, drive only if absolutely necessary. Minnesota drivers can get up-to-date road conditions, construction updates, and traffic camera views by visiting the official [Minnesota 511](https://www.mn.gov/511) website, downloading the 511MN mobile app, or dialing 511 on any phone. Remember to get your winter gear ready and include;

 First Aid Kit  Flashlight  Water  Charger  Blanket  Food

Resources: safekidsgf.com | safekids.org/blog/back-school-blog | buckleup.mn.org | safekids.org/tip/fire-safety-tips

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