



A Devilish Dilemma

Is it alright to dress up your pets for Halloween?

You might be tempted to make your cat or dog a super hero or diva, but the decision on whether or not to don a costume should be left up to your pet. “Some pets love the attention and wearing a costume and posing for picture is in their nature,” said Nancy Hill, President of the SCRAPS Hope Foundation. “Others animals can be stressed, frightened or feel constrained.”

If you decide to have your pet wear a costume, here are some helpful safety tips to keep in mind:

- Your pet’s Halloween garb should not constrict his movement or hearing, or impede his ability to breathe, bark or meow. Be sure to try on costumes in advance—and if your furry friend seems distressed, you’ll want to ditch the mini-pirate hat and vest.
- Examine your pet’s costume and make sure it doesn’t have any small, dangling or easily chewed-off pieces that he could choke on. Also, ill-fitting outfits can get caught on external objects or your pet, leading to injury.
- Make sure your dog or cat is licensed and microchipped. If for any reason your pet escapes and becomes lost during Halloween festivities, a microchip can be a lifesaver.
- That bowl of candy is for trick-or-treaters, not for Scruffy and Fluffy. Chocolate in all forms — especially dark or baking chocolate — can be very dangerous for dogs and cats. Candies containing the artificial sweetener xylitol can also cause problems.
- A carved pumpkin certainly is festive, but do exercise caution if you choose to add a candle. Pets can easily knock a lit pumpkin over and cause a fire. Curious kittens especially run the risk of getting burned or singed by candle flames.
- All but the most social dogs and cats should be kept in a separate room away from the front door during peak trick-or-treating hours. Too many strangers can be scary and stressful for pets.

About SCRAPS: Spokane County Regional Animal Protection Service (SCRAPS) is a progressive municipal animal care and protection agency serving the unincorporated areas of Spokane County, the cities of Spokane Valley, Liberty Lake, Millwood, and Cheney. SCRAPS has deputized animal protection officers extensively trained to enforce animal laws and respond to emergency situations. SCRAPS is also active in educational and community outreach programs and is dedicated to its continued investment in innovative behavioral programs.