

SAFETY TIPS

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE — AUGUST 21, 2017



On August 21, millions of people across the country will experience the first total solar eclipse to cross America coast-to-coast in 99 years. In addition to those who live in the “path of totality,” which includes a large part of the Kansas City region, up to 7 million people nationwide are expected to travel to see the eclipse.

Emergency management agencies, transportation officials and organizations like the American Red Cross are planning for traffic problems and other challenges that may be associated with the event.

What can you do to prepare?

If you're traveling:

- Pack an emergency kit in case you get stuck in traffic or can't find a place to stay. Include water, non-perishable food, a flashlight, a battery-powered radio, first aid kit, medications, infant supplies if applicable, a multi-purpose tool, personal hygiene items, cell phone chargers, extra cash, blankets, maps of the area and emergency contact information.
- Don't rely on GPS or map apps – cell phone service may be overwhelmed. Print out your directions.
- Let family or friends know where you are going and the route you plan to take to get there.
- Plan to arrive at your destination at least a day ahead of the eclipse. Know where you plan to stay, as most hotel rooms along the eclipse path are already sold out or renting for extremely high rates.
- Keep your gas tank full so you don't run out if you get stuck in traffic.
- Stay informed. Learn how officials in the area you're planning to visit contact people in case of an emergency. Download free apps from the American Red Cross and other reliable information sources.
- Check the weather forecast, and dress in layers so you can adjust to changes in weather conditions.
- Have an emergency plan. Determine a location to meet in case someone gets separated from your group, and where to go if there is severe weather.

If you're staying in town:

- The partial eclipse will begin at around 11:30 a.m., with totality for our region occurring shortly after 1 p.m. The eclipse will end by about 2:45 p.m.
- Avoid driving during the event if you can. If you must be out on the roads, drive with extra caution and consider taking the roads less traveled in your community. Do not pull over and park on busy roadways to view the eclipse.
- Fill up your gas tank the day before the event.
- Charge your cell phone, and make a contingency plan for staying in touch with family if cell phone service is unavailable.

- Check the weather forecast and plan accordingly. August weather is normally hot and humid. Use sunscreen and stay hydrated if you are outdoors. If storms are in the forecast, take precautions. Remember the warnings for thunderstorms (If Thunder Roars, Go Indoors) and flash flooding (Turn Around, Don't Drown).
- Be prepared and stay informed. Have an emergency kit on hand, have a plan and monitor reliable news sources for emergency information. Visit preparemetrokc.org for more information about emergency planning.

Viewing the eclipse:

- Protect your eyes! The only safe way to look directly at sun is through special-purpose solar filters, such as "eclipse glasses" or hand-held solar viewers. If you buy eclipse glasses, buy from a reputable vendor and make sure the glasses meet ISO 12312-2 international safety standards.
- Don't look through a camera lens or binoculars without a solar filter. This can cause serious injury.
- If you normally wear glasses, keep them on and put the eclipse glasses over them.
- Always supervise children using solar filters.
- If you plan to take photos, seek expert advice on proper equipment and techniques.

Note: If you use solar eclipse glasses, please be aware that they cannot be recycled. For paper glasses, snap out the lenses and put them in the trash; recycle the paper frames. For plastic viewing glasses, both frames and lenses must go in the trash.