



CITY OF ST JOSEPH HEALTH DEPARTMENT TOTAL PREPARATION INFORMATION SERIES

July 28, 2017

PERSONAL SAFETY AND THE ECLIPSE CROWD

The solar eclipse is a rock star of unparalleled notoriety and her stage is a vast 70-mile wide stretch across our continent! Eclipse viewing events are being planned all along the path of totality, including some in St. Joseph, where large numbers of people will gather for this spectacle. In these designated viewing sites, the population density will require those in attendance to be aware of their surroundings to keep themselves and their family members safe.

Attending an event of such significance is a unique and rare experience. Returning home safely is what will make the entire experience complete and irreplaceable. In this and other similar circumstances, such as attending a concert or festival, much of your personal safety is your responsibility. There are officials working diligently to ensure the safety of our community during these events, but ultimately, you must be prepared to take responsibility for yourself and your loved ones if you choose to attend one of the mass viewing sites. Following are some tips to help you do so:

- Scan your surroundings periodically throughout the event and be aware of those around you – map out how you would leave if you would suddenly need to
- Dress appropriately for the day –

This is obviously an outdoor event so wear sunscreen, insect repellent, hat, eclipse glasses, shoes that will protect your feet, and comfortable clothing

If attending with a group, consider dressing similarly to make it easier to find each other, or take note of what those in your party are wearing

- Are your valuables hidden?

On your body, put items in front pockets – only take necessities, not full wallet

Use a cross-body purse/bag or a wearable like a fanny-pack positioned in front

In your vehicle, store items in the trunk or hide them well, lock your vehicle once parked, and note where it is parked in relation to a stationary object

- Make a plan with your children NOW

Keep a diligent eye on them but IF you are separated from one another, where is the first place you'll look for each other? Make certain it is a stationary landmark that is easy for a child to find and get to

Write your cell phone number on your children or on a piece of paper to put in their pocket. Include your name and address for first responders to locate you

Take a picture of your children on your cell phone or camera – if you are separated from one another you will have a current photo with what they are wearing

Review the rules of stranger danger

Alert authorities if your child(ren) goes missing

Know the “lost child” plan formulated by event organizers – Every location that prepared with Emergency Planners has a strategy, make certain you know what it is for your viewing site

- If you are viewing the eclipse with a group of friends, treat the outing in a similar fashion as you would if you were taking the kids...

Designate a spot to meet, and meet there at regular intervals

Write phone numbers on a slip of paper so if cell phone batteries die or if cell service is interrupted, you can still reach one another by other means, such as a landline

Take a picture – if you are looking for each other, the crowd may be able to help you reconnect if you show the photo around

The rules of stranger danger can also apply to adults – do not blindly trust others in this unique situation

Alert authorities if you fear for the safety of someone in your group

- Bring enough water to last throughout the entire event so you can stay hydrated – you will not be safe if you experience heat-related symptoms or cannot communicate
- Move away from the scuffle if a disturbance occurs in the crowd
- Have enough fuel and a go-kit for your car – there is no way of knowing how long you will be in traffic getting into or out of the viewing sites

Our attention is going to be drawn UPWARDS for quite some time. Don't become a victim of someone who would take valuables from you while your attention is on the main event. Also be aware that looking up with your head in that position for a prolonged period may make some people feel dizzy or light-headed, or make their neck feel stiff and sore. Being safe in the crowd might include being prepared to take a moment after the eclipse if you feel a little off balance from holding your head back for so long.

The eclipse is going to be a spectacular event no matter where you watch it. When you attend an event with a large crowd, your own personal safety should always be a top priority. This list will help you get ready to have a memorable experience at one of the many events St. Joseph has to offer <http://www.stjomo.com/events-during-eclipse-weekend/>.

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