



CITY OF ST JOSEPH HEALTH DEPARTMENT TOTAL PREPARATION INFORMATION SERIES

August 18, 2017

ECLIPSE VIEWING FINAL REMINDERS

We are counting the hours to the most anticipated event St. Joseph has seen in decades! The Total Solar Eclipse is bringing untold numbers of visitors to our region and will have far reaching impact on the lives of residents. Even if the eclipse is not a big deal to you, there are some basic preparations you should make and accommodations you should prepare for because it is unlikely that every aspect of your day will operate as it normally does on August 21st.

For everyone who is planning to attend an eclipse event, whether public or private; some reminders:

Arrive Safe

Count on traffic congestion - fuel up, and if traveling to St. Joseph, get fuel prior to arriving in St. Joe.

Wear seat belts and keep children in child passenger safety seats at all times.

Stock a Car Kit with water, snacks, first aid, tools, games, and a MAP.

Be a GREAT driver – Maintain appropriate speeds and obey traffic laws, move over for emergency responders, watch for vehicles traveling the wrong direction (on one way roads in St. Joe) and distressed vehicles in need of assistance, be aware of all your surroundings including pedestrians, use the zipper merge, know where you are going and don't rely on GPS systems that may be overloaded.

Do not get distracted – by your phone or traffic or the progression of the eclipse.

Keep Yourself Safe

Using sunscreen and staying hydrated are critical for people who will be outdoors for several hours. This is especially true for the elderly, the young, and people who take medications that affect their body's ability to

regulate internal temperature or may be affected by sun exposure. Take water and sunscreen with you and use them regularly throughout the day.

Do not mess around with your vision! Use appropriate eye protection. We are so used to pulling out our cell phones to take pictures, but before you take photos of the eclipse, research to ensure you won't ruin your camera lens or damage your vision while focusing or changing settings. NASA has recommendations at <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/can-i-photograph-eclipse-my-smartphone>.

People who take medication regularly are advised to bring it with them if traveling. Even medicine only taken once a day, just in case a vehicle problem or some other unforeseen issue requires you to stay in town for an extended amount of time or overnight.

Be vigilant in a crowd. Note your location (and that of your parked vehicle) by a stationary object such as a building or a unique tree. Review "stranger danger" with children. Write your name and phone numbers on a note they can keep in a pocket or even directly on their skin in a location where it will not be rubbed off, in case you are separated. Take a photo of children as you arrive – it will show current clothing, hair style, etc. Make a plan with children they can understand and repeat. The plan should include where to meet if you are separated from one another (this could be another piece of information on the note), and who can be trusted to ask for assistance (tell kids to find an officer or event official or official vehicle like a fire truck). If you fear for the safety of your child, don't hesitate to notify authorities.

These tips can be adapted for adult groups as well! Write down phone numbers in case cell phone batteries die or cell service goes out. Take a photo! Show it around and the crowd could help you find each other. Make a group plan to meet at regular intervals at a specific spot. Keep your personal belongings close to you, and in front pockets or in a shoulder bag slung across the front of your body. Use cash, but don't carry too much at once or in large bills. Finally, move away from altercations in the crowd to keep yourself safe and respectfully follow the directions of authorities at your viewing site.

Prepare, prepare, prepare!

Now is the time to stock up on groceries, fuel, and other incidentals. If you'll be using coolers, freeze larger blocks of ice now rather than counting on convenience store ice. Charge batteries on everything from point-and-shoot camera's to flashlights to portable chargers. Get cash. Put a roll of toilet paper in your car.

Remember to try texting if mobile calls don't connect, but recognize cell service may be spotty. Procure a map of St. Joseph so you can navigate on surface streets rather than highways.

There are so many activities to enjoy in St. Joseph over the weekend! Making your eclipse plan in advance will free up time to relax, join the fun at Trails West! or other events, and learn more about the eclipse from some of the wonderful options available around town. This is an unprecedented event for public safety, community members and visitors alike. Practicing extra patience and kindness could turn a weekend of potential tension, confusion and frustration into one of laughter and new friendships. What an amazing opportunity to showcase our great city!

Once the eclipse has come and gone, take an opportunity to contribute a six word description of your eclipse experience to NASA's Eclipse in Six, found at eclipse2017.nasa.gov/eclipse-six. Be safe and enjoy!

Content support from <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov>

This institution is an equal opportunity provider