



Minnesota Astronomical Society Eagle Lake Observatory Public Star Party Guidelines

If this is your first star party, or it has been a while since you've been to one, please take a few moments to review these guidelines:

1. **PARK FEE AND HOURS:** Carver County Parks no longer charge for access to their parks. The main gate to the park opens at 6:00 am. During a Public Star Party we are usually open from 7:00 to 10:00 pm, but frequently stay until the last guest has left. Note the main gate to the park typically closes at 10:00 pm.
2. **RESTROOMS:** During the summer observing season, we've had a portable restroom behind the observatory building. Indoor ADA restrooms are available in the large barn at the park entrance (entry is on the building's north side). There are also outhouses northwest of the observatory, beyond the baseball diamond. During the summer, restrooms are available in the building by the lake.
3. Please **AVOID USING WHITE LIGHT.** Do not use a white flashlight. The human eye requires 30 minutes to fully adapt to darkness. If exposed to white light, even for a second, this "dark adaptation" is lost and the thirty minute process starts all over again. Using a dim red light (a flashlight with a red filter for example) is appreciated at star parties. Red "glow sticks" may also be available at the observatory for a small donation -- check with an MAS volunteer for more information.
4. Similarly, please **AVOID USING YOUR VEHICLE'S HEADLIGHTS** unless you are well away from the observing area. Star party participants appreciate your use of your vehicle's parking lights for illumination while driving near the observing area. If possible, turn off internal and accessory lighting (trunks, interior lights, etc.) as well. Use common sense regarding use of headlights when arriving or departing a star party. Balance your need for driving safety with star party participants' desire to that you limit their use. (Note: Temporarily dimming the interior dashboard lights will make it easier to see the road when using the parking lights).
5. **PLAN YOUR DEPARTURE** by backing into your parking space in order to avoid flooding the observing area with the light from your back-up lights when you leave. Park away from the main observing area when possible.
6. **CHILDREN ARE WELCOME WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.** Consider carefully the child's age and attention span before bringing them along. Star gazing can quickly become boring for younger children. If you do bring children, please supervise them at all times for their safety and the safety of the astronomical equipment in use at the star party. No running or playing in the observatory or around any telescopes. Also, PLEASE do not have your children wear shoes with flashing lights.
7. **DRESS APPROPRIATELY.** It can become much cooler than you think during spring, fall and winter nights. Bring a coat, gloves, hat, extra clothing and especially heavy socks & boots with you just in case it becomes colder than you anticipate.
8. **BUGS**, particularly gnats and mosquitoes, are a nuisance in the summer. If you need to use an insect repellent, please use a lotion. If you have a spray repellent, only apply it **DOWNWIND** and well away from any telescopes.
9. **NO LITTERING.** If you brought it, please take it with you when you leave. Do not to leave anything on the walls of the observatory and search the area before leaving to check for items you may have dropped.
10. **BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS.** Avoid loud radios or music. Always ask permission before touching or using someone else's equipment.
11. **PHOTOGRAPHS.** It is understandable that you may want to take photos of the observatory or of what you are viewing through the telescope eyepiece. However, once the sky becomes dark avoid using a flash to take any pictures. Regarding images through the telescopes, we generally would give you additional time to take a photo, but if there are others waiting in line please limit this to about 10 or 15 seconds. We may ask you to step out of line and return with your cell camera on an attachment we can provide once the line has gone down.
12. **NO SMOKING** is allowed within the observatory. If you must smoke, please do so only **DOWNWIND** and away from the observatory, the observing area and any equipment.
13. **NO FOOD OR DRINK NEAR THE TELESCOPES & NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES** at the observatory during our public star parties. Some telescopes have an open design and can be damaged easily by someone accidentally dropping something onto a telescopes optics.
14. **RESPECT OTHERS.** The Minnesota Astronomical Society is open to all, regardless of age, gender, ethnic background, religion, etc. Inappropriate comments or actions will not be tolerated, and after a suitable warning, offending parties will be asked to leave.
15. Please **CONSIDER LEAVING YOUR PETS AT HOME.** Not everyone is comfortable around animals and their presence introduces the possibility of personal injury or damage to expensive astronomical equipment.
16. **DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS!** -- MAS members enjoy talking about their hobby and are often willing to share their love of the universe with you. But also consider that some members may be involved in specific observing activities or projects that might limit their ability to answer your questions in detail.
17. **HAVE FUN!** Star parties are meant to be enjoyed by all. That's why they're called parties!