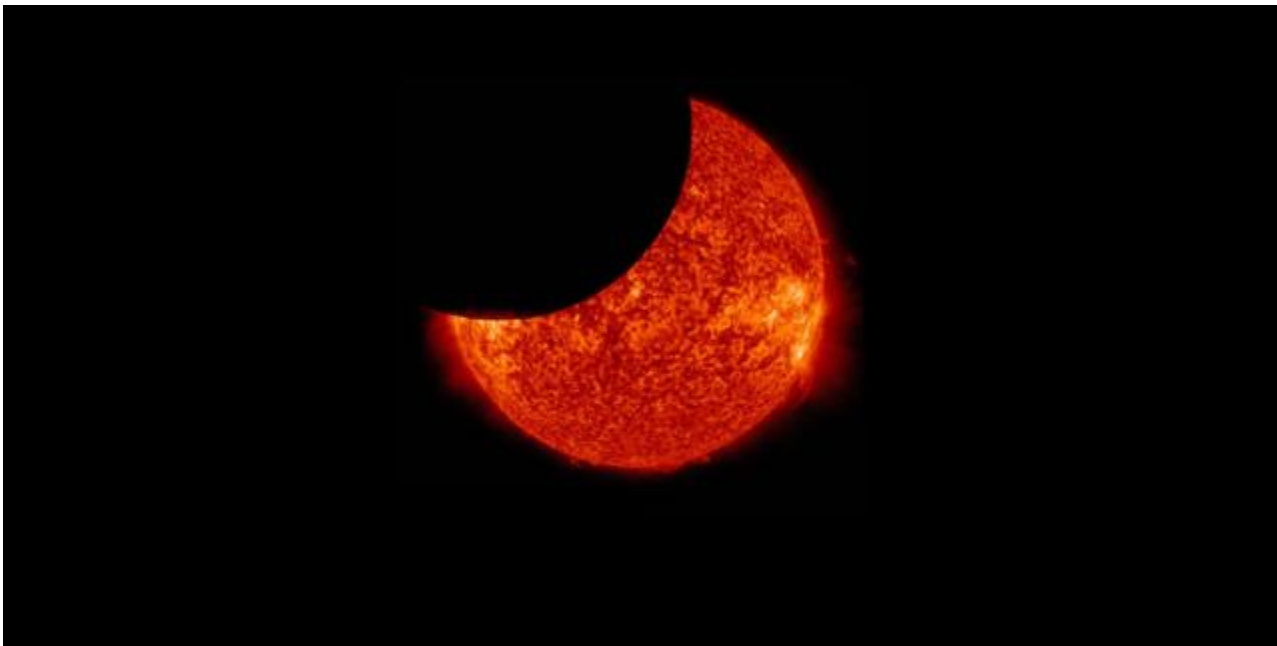


Illinois State Police encourages public to prepare for the solar eclipse

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DUQUOIN, IL – Illinois State Police (ISP) District 13/22 Commander, Lieutenant Michael Alvey, encourages attendees to the August 21, 2017, solar eclipse in Southern Illinois to begin their preparations now. “With the eclipse less than two weeks out, we want to make sure Southern Illinoisans, and the attendees that will be coming into the area, are ready to safely enjoy this event,” stated Alvey. “We have been planning for months with our local partners and want the public to be aware of a few things to help make this event as safe as it can be,” he continued

The ISP has been working with local police agencies, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, local area tourism bureaus, and other community partners to ensure we are ready to handle the influx of people traveling to Southern Illinois. Crowds are estimated to be between 50,000 and 200,000 in the Carbondale area and other prime viewing locations nearby.

The ISP offers the following suggestions for travel and viewing safety:

- The ISP expects the Interstate 57, U.S. Route 51, and Illinois Route 13 corridors to be among the most highly traveled from Friday, August 15, through Tuesday, August 22. Local travelers should seek alternate routes where applicable.
- Motorists traveling these routes should plan ahead for extra traffic congestion and allow additional travel time. Check www.gettingaroundillinois.com or real-time traffic apps for local traffic information before you leave.
- Because of the darkness created by the passing shadow, it is a good idea to turn on your vehicle's headlights. Do not rely on your vehicle's automatic headlight feature to do it for you. Manually activate your headlights to ensure they are turned on.
- Do not drive with your Solar Eclipse viewing glasses on or try to take photographs while driving. The glasses are only needed while looking directly at the sun. For additional specific information on viewing safety, check <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/safety>
- Get your Solar Eclipse viewing glasses early as supplies may dry up as the eclipse approaches. Make sure they are of good quality as well because looking directly at the sun will permanently damage your eyes. For additional information regarding the level of protection needed for safe viewing, visit <https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/safety>
- DO NOT stop along the highway to view the eclipse. The shoulder is for emergency parking only. Should there be an incident emergency responders need to get to, we will need the shoulders for ingress and egress. Viewing should be conducted from a safe location away from traffic.
- Watch for pedestrians! Although discouraged, people may be parking and walking along roadways in the hour before the total eclipse to get the best viewing.
- Arrive at your planned viewing area or destination early and with the things you need to be comfortable for an extended period outdoors. For other great tips on being prepared, visit <https://www.illinois.gov/ready/Press/Pages/073117.aspx>

“Southern Illinois is a great place to live and work,” added Commander Alvey. “This event gives us the opportunity to showcase our communities to visitors from across the nation. With some pre-planning and our minds focused on safety, this can be the event of a lifetime.”

For additional information in the coming days regarding eclipse safety, please visit the *Illinois State Police District 13 DuQuoin* Facebook page and hit the Like button to follow us.