

Santa Fe Stargazing Star Party Etiquette

To ensure that everyone has a safe and enjoyable experience at our public and private star parties we ask that you follow a few simple guidelines:

Follow all local venue rules.

The Santa Fe Stargazer leader will review local rules for the public site before the event starts. Star party sites are not owned by SFS, and it is important that all owner rules are followed. These may vary from site to site, though most public sites prohibit alcoholic beverages on site.

No Dogs on The Observing Field (except for service dogs)

The dark sky protocol, the presence of astronomical equipment and the many members of the general public combine to make for a problematic environment for canines.

No Smoking on The Observing Field

Smoke damages telescope optics and can cause sensitive individuals to suffer allergic reactions.

No Aerosol Sprays on The Observing Field

One drop of spray can permanently damage telescope optics. Please do not apply insect repellent spray or use any other aerosol spray on the observing field. Lotions and roll-on repellents are fine.

No White Lights After Dusk

White light ruins the dark adaptation that your eyes develop after about 20 or 30 minutes in the dark. You will need this dark adaptation to see faint deep sky objects. When a white light is used after dark anywhere in the vicinity of the observing field (flashlights, car headlights, even a match) it takes up to 30 minutes for everyone to regain their night vision. Once your eyes adapt to the darkness, you will be able to find your way around and avoid obstructions without a flashlight. If you still need a bit of light to see, you must use a red flashlight.

Turn Off Your Headlights and Interior Lights

Arrive before dark so your vehicle headlights will not interfere with other viewer's night vision. When you arrive at an observing site after dark, please turn off your

car's headlights before entering the parking area if it is safe to do so. When you leave an observing site after dark, please do not turn on your car's headlights until after you exit the parking area. Turn off any interior lights that can be turned off.

No Flash Photography

The bright strobe of a camera flash can destroy everyone's night vision for 45 minutes to an hour. Photographs taken under dark conditions using an on-camera flash seldom, if ever, turn out well anyway.

Watch Your Children

Children are always welcome at our star parties; but, since the observing field is dark, small children are more likely to trip and get hurt, become lost, or bump into and damage expensive equipment

Try Not to Kick up Dirt

The dust and sand can be harmful to telescope optics.

No Food or Drink Around the Telescopes

Accidents happen. Let's not take any chances.

Ask Before Touching

Some astronomers may be adjusting their equipment or the telescope may not be aimed at any object in particular; so please ask before touching a telescope or other equipment. It is best for children to approach a telescope with their hands behind their back.

Give Yourself Time at the Eyepiece

Your eye needs a few seconds to get used to looking through the scope. Your view of detail will improve after just 5 seconds. If you don't see anything, don't be afraid to say something. Sometimes the scope gets bumped or the object may drift out of view. If you can't see, speak up!

