

Star Party Etiquette: For Attending Your First Public Star Party

Public Star Parties are held so that we can share our telescopes with anyone who wishes to attend. Since star parties are held at night in the dark, a few common courtesies will go a long way to making sure that everyone has a good time and a safe time.

1. Bring warm clothing, including more than you think you will need, even in summer.
2. Drive very slowly and carefully after dark in the parking area.
3. Park with your vehicle's headlights pointing away from the observing field.
4. Ask someone to guide you if you feel you cannot drive safely in a darkened parking area.
5. Avoid using white light whenever possible. Cover your flashlight with red cellophane or red tape to help protect everyone's night vision.
6. Set your cell phone or tablet app to "night mode" to damp down the white light, and keep it pointed away from other people's eyes. To take a picture, turn off the flash first.
7. Ask for permission before touching anyone's viewing equipment.
8. Green laser pointers are not allowed, except by permission of the event coordinator. They present a hazard to airplanes.
9. Children are welcome. However, kids can get cold and tired early so bring warm clothes and maybe a sleeping bag for them. At all times, RCA bears no responsibility for supervision of children. Their parents or guardians need to know where they are and supervise them appropriately. Do not let children run around unattended.
10. Pets are best left at home, but if you must bring your pet, make sure they are on a leash, under control and quiet at all times. Make sure that they do their business away from the observing field and that you clean up after your pet.
11. Smoking and alcohol are not allowed during observing hours in the observing area.
12. Yes it's a party, but loud music or boisterous behavior are not part of the tradition.