



Star Party Etiquette, Conduct, & Guidelines

When attending a star party, there are a few guidelines one should keep in mind out of respect and courtesy for others. Most are just common sense.

- Don't use white lights. Use red lights sparingly. If for some reason you MUST use a white light, shout out a warning.
- Turn down the brightness of your phone, tablet, or other electronic device. These can be almost as bright as a flashlight.
- Make sure your car doesn't violate the above. Backup lights and even interior lights can ruin someone's night vision. If you're planning to leave before dawn, park so as to be able to leave without using your lights.
- If you come to a star party without a telescope, please park some distance away from the observing site to save room for those with heavy equipment to carry.
- Drive slowly so as to avoid kicking up dust.
- Never touch anyone else's equipment without permission. But don't be afraid to ask. Never touch any glass optical surface.
- Don't litter.
- Watch your step (but don't use a flashlight). Be especially careful of wires on the ground. Some scopes require power, and some folks use their car's battery. If your scope requires power, try to make the wires as safe as possible.
- If you're a visitor or a newbie, try not to monopolize another person's time. The astronomers are there to enjoy the sky, not to give lessons. Except, of course, when the star party is specifically organized for the public or newbies.
- Be doubly careful when astrophotographers are doing their thing.
- Talking -- avoid loud talking and boisterous behavior. Astronomy is a quiet, peaceful activity.
- Children -- some folks welcome them, others don't. If you do bring children make sure that they are quiet, careful and act like adults.
- Pets - If you bring your pet make sure it is on a leash, is quiet, and under control.
- Music -- some star parties ban music altogether; some are less strict. Just remember that music that you love may be extremely irritating to others. When in doubt use a headset.
- Smoking -- smokers should stay downwind of non-smokers and their telescopes. Just because you're outdoors doesn't mean your smoking isn't annoying, disrespectful, and unhealthy to others.