



Preparing for the 2024 Total Eclipse in Summit County, Ohio

WHEN: April 8, 2024, a total eclipse will cross over North America, passing over Mexico, parts of the US, and Canada. Ohioans within a 124-mile band will experience a total solar eclipse. Only 21 total eclipses have crossed over the lower US since its founding. The last Ohio total eclipse was in 1806; the next will be in 2099. Ohio will be one of 13 lucky states in the US that will experience the eclipse. This eclipse will be an “almost exclusively North American event,” so international travelers will visit Ohio to view the eclipse. Summit County is in the “Full Totality Area;” the closest “centerline totality area” will be in Lorain County.

WHAT IS IT: The moon passes between the Sun and Earth and totally obscures the Sun. There will be a partial eclipse prior to, and following, the total eclipse. The partial eclipse will begin at 1:59 pm and will end at 4:29 pm. The total eclipse will be from around 3:13 pm to 3:17 pm. During the eclipse, viewers can expect the temperature to drop, birds to go silent, the wind to die down, and some stars and planets to become visible.

LESSONS LEARNED: On August 21, 2017, a total solar eclipse moved east to west across the US, covering 14 states. Kentucky received visitors from 47 states and 25 countries for the total eclipse that lasted less than 3 minutes. Traffic congestion was at its peak immediately after the event. One parkway backup was 10 miles in length.

SAFETY: It’s never safe to look directly at the Sun’s rays, even if partially or totally obscured. Sunglasses of any kind or cost are not safe for viewing the Sun. Only look at the Sun if you have solar eclipse glasses that meet the “ISO-12312-2 international standard.” Viewers should put on their glasses before looking up and look down before removing them. When the Moon completely blocks the visible surface of the Sun during a total solar eclipse, viewers can remove their eclipse glasses. A total solar eclipse is the only type of solar eclipse where eclipse glasses can be momentarily removed. Suppliers of approved/recommended glasses can be found at the American Astrological Society’s website, <https://eclipse.aas.org>.

PLANNING: “PACK YOUR PATIENCE AND FILL YOUR TANK.” If planning to travel to view the eclipse, it is recommended that you plan carefully and review recommendations at government websites like www.nasa.gov and <https://ema.ohio.gov>. Some counties will experience significant traffic prior to and following the eclipse. For example, Richland County, with 125,000 total residents, expects 250,000 visitors for the eclipse.

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS: There is very little research on how an eclipse might impact people who experience symptoms of serious mental illness. In general, it’s a good idea for mental health professionals to educate clients about the event, assist clients in preparing, and pay special attention to clients who may have delusions, paranoia, or other psychotic symptoms who may become particularly distressed or symptomatic by the event.

SOURCES:

The National Operations Center of Excellence, <https://transportationops.org/case-studies/kentucky-lessons-learned-2017-solar-eclipse>

WDRB.com

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