

The West Rand Astronomy Club



Star Party Etiquette

No matter what the temperature is forecast to be, it will always be colder, so make sure that you bring along enough warm clothes, layer up so that as the evening gets colder, you can add an extra jersey etc. Bring along your camping chairs so that you have somewhere comfortable to sit while you gaze at the wonders of the dark sky.

No White Light

In dark conditions, your eyes adjust and any sudden white light can be blinding, and so we insist on **no white lights** being used after sun down. Please ensure that all torches are covered in a few layers of red cellophane, and when in use, kindly keep it pointed towards the ground; please do not go around pointing it in people's faces. If you need to open car doors or boots, try where possible to switch the interior light off inside your car. If this is not possible, kindly be considerate and not open doors unnecessarily.

If you have to leave the observing area early, please be considerate and not switch on your car lights until you are sufficiently away from the other observers. Even brake lights can be bothersome to people that are completely night-vision adapted.

If you have no choice and have to use a white light for any reason, simply call out "White Light" and then wait a few seconds before switching on the light. This will allow anyone close to you to turn or move away from the light.

Green Lasers

Please limit the use of green laser 'sky pointers' to the early hours of the evening as they may interfere with astrophotography. They are also becoming increasingly restricted as they can interfere with airline traffic. These are powerful instruments and must be used responsibly and knowledgably. If using a green laser call out "Green Laser" before switching it on.

General

Star parties are a great place to learn more about the stars or about a hobby that you are interested in pursuing, so by all means, wander around and chat to other observers about their telescopes and their area of interest, but also, please be considerate.

Do not spend hours looking through one person's telescope, there are others that will also want to look at the object, and the owner will also want to do some personal viewing as well. Please do not touch or 'fiddle' with the telescope that you are viewing through, the owner will always show you how to focus the telescope as each model is slightly different.

If you are considering bringing along a DSLR Camera, please look at the camera setting before hand and turn down the display LCD's brightness as this can be quite blinding

Smokers need to be especially considerate of non-smokers, since being outdoors, it is not the smoke that is necessarily the problem, it is the lighting of the cigarette. Make a point of turning away from people when you strike a match or lighter as the glow of the flame is a killer to night adapted eyes. Please also be very considerate of the host, **NO CIGARETTE STOMPIES ARE TO BE THROWN ON THE FLOOR**, kindly bring along a container to put them in. Kindly do not smoke while looking through a telescope.

Please bring along a picnic basket with drinks and snacks, but remember to take all of your refuse with you. Alcohol is occasionally enjoyed at the star parties, but in small amounts. The telescopes are expensive and many owners do not want people that are inebriated near their telescopes. Please be considerate of the people around you.

Most of all, star parties are a fun experience for people to share knowledge and simply enjoy the night sky.