

2017 Total Solar Eclipse

Macon County Emergency Management is working with local, State, Federal and a host of other agencies to ensure that Macon County residents and visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience during the 2017 solar eclipse on August 21, 2017. This is the first total eclipse to cross the continental United States in many years and may attract many spectators.

Macon County, NC is among a group of areas in an arc across the United States that will experience a few minutes of total darkness during the day at approximately 2:30 PM. Although many areas will experience some effects from the eclipse, very few will experience total darkness, also known as totality. Exact numbers are very difficult to estimate, but officials are planning for an influx of visitors into the area for several days prior to and following the event. August is also a significant vacation and travel time for our state and local areas. Expectations are for many things such as motels, hotels, rentals, and other travel and tourism related industries to be at or above capacity.

Suggestions for Residents and Visitors:

- Be prepared for crowds, lines and traffic. Areas around construction zones in east Franklin and intersections in downtown Highlands are expected to be especially congested. Allow extra time for travel.
- Have snacks, water and first-aid supplies on hand in case crowds/lines/traffic becomes significant while you are traveling.
- Be aware of the hazards of the area especially this time of year including steep and winding rural roads, heavy and slow moving traffic, severe thunderstorms, and trip and fall hazards particularly around waterfalls and other trail areas.
- Have an emergency kit and emergency plan; make sure family members or friends know your schedule, when you are expected to return, and your plan if something happens.

Suggestions for Businesses and Employers:

- Prepare for a larger than normal influx of customers. Goods should be ordered and staffing adjusted accordingly.
- Be aware that some visitors unfamiliar with the area may be in AUTHORIZED and UNAUTHORIZED areas.
- Encourage your employees to be prepared with full fuel tanks and other necessary supplies to avoid long lines and other delays that could occur should the influx of visitors be significant.
- Talk to suppliers, particularly those out of the local area, that may not anticipate the event. Some deliveries might need to be adjusted accordingly.

With little information available except estimates for potential visitors and no event in recent history comparable on which to base any estimates, Macon County Emergency Management recommends treating this event as a significant travel holiday event. We will continue to monitor the event as it draws near providing information as it becomes available and update our plans as necessary.

Important information such as viewing safety can be found at <http://eclipse2017.nasa.gov>