



2017 Columbia Total Solar Eclipse FAQs

- **What is a total solar eclipse?**
 - Essentially, it's when the moon moves right in front of the sun, covering it completely for a very short time. It darkens the whole sky, you can look right at the sun (only when it's completely covered, though you must use special solar eclipse glasses to view the eclipse).
- **When will it happen?**
 - Monday, August 21, 2017
- **Will the City of Columbia offices be open?**
 - Yes, City offices will remain open, except for all City payment centers will be closed from 1pm – 3pm
- **How will traffic operations be handled?**
 - Staged bucket trucks and operation staff will be around Columbia for quick respond for issues and to respond chasing traffic patterns so they can modify signal timings if needed. Signal lanes will be adjusted when needed.
- **Are there any street/road closures?**
 - At this point CPD have not received any request to close any street. They will work with City staff to see if there's a need to divert traffic due to a large scale event.
- **Will school district close for the Total Solar Eclipse?**
 - On a local level they are aware that some of the school districts in the Midlands will be closed and will return on Tuesday, August 22.
- **What to do in an emergency situation?**
 - For emergencies call 9-1-1
 - For non-emergencies call 803-545-3300
- **I live in the path! Can I watch it from my house?**
 - Absolutely!! You are incredibly lucky, and you should invite lots of friends over. Please see our viewing tips on the City website and social media platforms, and get enough pairs of eclipse glasses for all the people you'll invite to experience it with you. (An eclipse is even better if shared with a few hundred of your closest friends!)
- **Where can I get Eclipse glasses?**
 - Contact Experience ColumbiaSC at 803-545-0000

- **Can I bring my pets?**
 - NO! Animals will be scared by the eclipse.
- **How do I take pictures of the eclipse?**
 - Unless you have special solar filters for your camera and telescope, you can't even set up for pictures like this - the heat of the sun will melt your lenses! If you want to pull out a point and shoot during totality, be advised that your pictures will NOT be any good.
- **So a telescope is out, too?**
 - Yes, unless you have a special solar filter that fits over the end of the scope (not at the eyepiece!), and you know how to use it properly.
- **What if it's cloudy that day?**
 - If it's cloudy, you won't see anything.
- **What to wear during Solar Eclipse?**
 - Dress for summer & hot-humid weather.
- **Can I view the Solar Eclipse from the City parking garages?**
 - No, the City parking garages are strictly for parking purposes only.
- **Will traffic have a heavy impact on Columbia?**
 - Yes, heavy traffic will be from Friday, August 18 – Tuesday, August 22
- **What time should I expect the Solar Eclipse?**
 - Around 1:13 p.m. the solar eclipse will start
 - Around 2:41 p.m. Totality will begin
 - Around 2:43 p.m. the solar eclipse will end
- **When do I need to wear the eclipse glasses?**
 - When the eclipse is starting at 1:13 p.m.
 - Take off your eclipse glasses at 2:41 p.m.
 - Put eclipse glasses back on when the sun begins to peak from behind the moon at 2:43 p.m.
- **How can I pay my water bill?**
 - City payment centers will be open from 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
 - Re-opens from 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.
 - Online payments are acceptable
- **What is the schedule for the City garbage & recycling pickup?**
 - Garbage and recycling pick-up will remain on regular schedule
- **When is a good day and time to go shopping for groceries?**
 - Any day and time before Friday, August 18 and after Tuesday, August 22
- **How will the City alert citizens about the Solar Eclipse?**
 - Columbia-Richland 9-1-1 will be sending out a message through Columbia-Richland Alerts.
- **How do I receive the Columbia-Richland Alerts?**
 - Please sign-up for alerts at www.columbiasc.net/911/citizens-alerts

- **What devices can I receive the Columbia-Richland Alerts?**
 - Any device you would like to setup the alerts through such as:
 - Home phone
 - Cell phone
 - Business phone
- **What if I'm driving during the solar eclipse at 1:13pm, 2:41pm or 2:43 pm?**
 - Do not stop on the interstate nor the shoulder of the highway.
 - Go to the next exit and stop in a safe location
- **If I'm in the car do I need solar eclipse glasses to view the solar eclipse?**
 - Yes, it will damage your eyes.
 - You will not need eclipse glasses to see totality at 2:41pm
 - You will need eclipse glasses after totality at 2:43 pm
 - Do not drive with eclipse glasses on
- **Will the City host any events during the Eclipse weekend August 18 – August 21?**
 - No, the City will not host any events during the eclipse weekend, please visit <http://totaleclipsecolumbiasc.com/event/> for events.
- **Do I have to pay for parking downtown the day of the Eclipse?**
 - Event parking rates may apply for City parking decks/lots during the Total Solar Eclipse weekend, cash only.
- **Will automatic city street lights be turned OFF for the eclipse?**
 - Due to safety concerns and the number of photocells in both our systems and SCE&G's system we will not be turning off City street lights.