



To: Colchester Selectboard
From: Aaron Frank, Town Manager; Renae Marshall, Deputy Town Manager
CC: Jeff Barton; Special Projects Manager; Pete Hull, Police Chief; Bryan Osborne, DPW Director
Date: March 19, 2024
Re: Solar Eclipse Information

The purpose of this memo is to document the potential traffic and personal safety impacts on the community from the upcoming once-in-a-lifetime solar eclipse event and to share information on how to prepare for any impacts.

Background: On April 8, 2024, beginning at approximately 3:26 p.m., a total eclipse of the Sun will be experienced from northern Vermont for the first time since 1932. The Sun will be completely blocked by the Moon for approximately three minutes as it passes between the Sun and Earth. Northern Vermont will not have the opportunity to view another total eclipse of the Sun until 2106.

The most recent total solar eclipse took place in 2017 and approximately five million people traveled to view it from various locations which spanned from a portion of Oregon to some of the midwestern states and down to South Carolina and Georgia. The State of Vermont's [Department of Emergency Management](#) notes that between 50,000 to 200,000 people could visit Vermont during the April 8, 2024 event. They also remind us that when 65,000 people showed up to the Phish concert in Coventry in 2004, there were 30 miles of traffic jams.

A large number of vehicles and people will be traveling around Vermont and New England the weekend before and the day of the eclipse. Most likely the most significant impacts will be experienced immediately after the eclipse. Colchester has beautiful land and water features, but its road network is limited by that geography.

Along with the information above, below are the personal and traffic safety tips we have shared with the public via outreach efforts:

Eye Safety: To view the eclipse, you either need special eclipse glasses or a handheld solar viewer that meets the ISO standards. Ordinary sunglasses, even very dark ones, are not safe for looking at the Sun; they transmit far more sunlight than is safe for our eyes. **You can pick up a free pair of eclipse glasses from the Colchester Burnham Memorial Library, while supplies last, beginning April 1st**

Please Remember:

- Always supervise children using eclipse glasses.
- If you normally wear eyeglasses, keep them on and put your eclipse glasses over them

- After you are finished looking at the Sun, turn away before removing your filter — do not remove it while looking at the Sun
- Do not look at the eclipsed or partially eclipsed Sun through an unfiltered camera, telescope, binoculars, or other optical device
- For more information on how to protect your eyes, please visit: <https://eclipse.aas.org/eye-safety>

Learn how to make a handheld solar viewer at the following links:

- <https://eclipse.aas.org/eye-safety/projection>
- https://clearinghouse.starnetlibraries.org/astronomy-and-space/114-pinhole-projection-in-a-box.html?search_query=pinhole&results=4
- https://clearinghouse.starnetlibraries.org/astronomy-and-space/138-pinhole-viewer-cereal-box-version.html?search_query=pinhole&results=4
- https://clearinghouse.starnetlibraries.org/astronomy-and-space/139-pinhole-projector-shipping-box-version.html?search_query=pinhole&results=4

Eclipse Traffic Warning: The City of Burlington will close important roads on April 8th. The Beltline will be closed from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Other roads including Battery Street, Park Street and a portion of North Avenue will be closed from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. as noted [here](#).

We do not know the exact impacts to local, regional or statewide transportation networks.

If you do not wish to be impacted by delays or traffic jams on April 8th, please:

- Shop for food and other necessities prior to the weekend of April 6th-7th
- Fill your car with gas prior to the weekend of April 6th-7th
- Make plans with childcare providers, as you may be late due to traffic, or may not be able to get there before they close
- Avoid travel on April 8th until well after the eclipse and when traffic apps such as Google Maps Traffic or [Waze](#) show there is no longer increased traffic impacts

If you must travel on April 8th please:

- Ensure you have a full tank of gas
- Expect extended delays
- Plan your route using a traffic app
- Pack warm clothes, water, and snacks in case you are stuck in traffic
- Be patient. A major issue in other communities that have experienced such events is road rage due to congested traffic
- Please do not overwhelm public safety with phone calls regarding non-crash related traffic issues. They will be aware. Only contact them for emergency situations
- For more information, please visit: <https://www.vermont.gov/eclipse#gsc.tab=0>

Closures: The Colchester Burnham Memorial Library will be closed for staff training on April 8th. Town Hall will close at 12 p.m. Recreation programming, including ACE before/after school will not be available on April 8th.

Thank you.