



Back Bay Amateur Astronomers

"Bringing Astronomy to the People of Hampton Roads"



Event Etiquette

We all want to have a great time at your event!
Please follow these simple rules that keep things fun for everybody.

No running or playing around the telescopes. It's dark, and someone might get hurt or damage the telescopes.

Try not to kick up dirt. The dust and sand can be harmful to telescope optics.

Ask before you touch a telescope. They move very easily. These scopes are the personal property of the astronomer, and many were handmade. Let's be extra careful with them.

It is never necessary to grab the eyepiece, as looking is done with the eye. The image is always formed above the glass surface of an eyepiece; your eye should not contact it.

Please ask before attempting to adjust the focus of a telescope. If the image is blurry ask the astronomer for assistance. Many focusers can be locked and damage can occur if focusing is attempted while locked.

Be careful when moving around or approaching a telescope. There may be electrical wires or other trip hazards on the ground leading to the scope.

Be careful not to bump the scopes. You could knock the scope off its target or even cause damage to its drive system.

No white lights around the telescopes after dark. It takes 30 mins for your eyes to adjust to the darkness and less than a second to lose your night vision. We always cover our lights in red to make them "night vision friendly." To fully enjoy the experience, observers need to be dark adapted and do their utmost to preserve the dark environment. But of course, **safety must come first!** The best light to use is a variable red LED flashlight.

Give yourself time at the eyepiece. Your eye needs a few seconds to get used to looking through the scope. Your view of detail will improve after just 5 seconds.

If you don't see anything, don't be afraid to say something. Sometimes the scope gets bumped or the object may drift out of view. If you can't see, speak up! We really want you to enjoy the view.

Ask questions! Astronomers love to answer questions.

Don't stand in front of a telescope. You'd be surprised how many people do.

Be sure to look through each scope. Each telescope gives a different view even when they are all pointing at the same object. Green laser pointers are permitted, but they should be used carefully and never by children. They are not toys as they can cause considerable damage to the eye.

The BBAA does not generally provide refreshments or snacks at events. If food or drinks are shared they are offered by individuals, and are enjoyed at the user's own risk. Visitors are welcome and encouraged to bring their own snacks and drinks to events.

No food or drink around the telescopes. Accidents happen. Let's not take any chances.

Bringing a pet to observing sessions, while not forbidden, is also not encouraged. If you must bring your pet, be sure you can control the animal and keep them away from the telescopes, food, and other guests.

Please dress appropriately. In warm months, you should expect to encounter mosquitoes and other biting insects, especially at dusk. The less skin exposed the better; shorts are never recommended. Always come prepared for cooler than expected temperatures even in summer. In cold months be sure to dress in layers and wear a hat.

Please avoid spraying bug sprays in the vicinity of the telescopes. The chemicals in the sprays can damage the optics of the telescope.

You may have to climb a ladder to reach the eyepiece for larger scopes. Many telescopes require the use of a foot stool or ladder to view through the eyepiece. If you need help on them please ask for assistance and use them carefully. You should hold onto the ladder and not the scope.

You observe at your own risk! The BBAA assumes no responsibility for any injury, damage, or loss.

Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

Please do not smoke near the telescopes.