



MISSISSIPPI OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

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Solar Eclipse Safety: Mississippi Optometric Association encourages safe and fun viewing of August eclipse in Mississippi classrooms

MADISON, MS — Educators and students across Mississippi will be watching on August 21, as a total solar eclipse will touch the U.S. mainland for the first time since 1979. It will follow a path that crosses the country from Salem, Oregon to Charleston, South Carolina. Tens of millions of people who live within a 70-mile radius of its cross-country track will witness the eclipse in totality (the sun completely blocked by the moon) while millions of others outside of it will enjoy a partial eclipse.

Mississippians will enjoy a partial view of the eclipse beginning at 11:54 am with maximum eclipse time at 1:26 pm. The Mississippi Optometric Association (MOA) is providing viewing tips as well as links to resources teachers might find useful in order to help students take full advantage of the educational opportunities presented by this event.

MOA is urging Mississippians to view the eclipse with proper eye protection to avoid any temporary or permanent eye damage from the sun.

"The eclipse is a rare moment that the whole country is able to share," said MOA President Dr. Mike Weeden, OD. "As America's primary eye health and vision care experts, doctors of optometry are excited to help everyone enjoy it safely by protecting their eyes."

Here are links to ideas and information for teachers:

- **The Solar Eclipse of 2017: Teacher Toolkit** (lots of information for K-12 teachers)
http://pbs.bento.storage.s3.amazonaws.com/hostedbento-prod/filer_public/WUCF%20Images/Files/2017%20Solar%20Eclipse%20for%20Teachers.pdf
- **2017 Solar Eclipse Resources: Astronomical Society of the Pacific** (animation, maps, apps, the history of eclipses, link to live stream in San Francisco)
<https://www.astrosociety.org/education/2017-solar-eclipse-information-resources/>
- American Association of Physics Teachers: Research-Based Teaching Resources
<https://www.aapt.org/resources/eclipse2017/>

To ensure students won't miss the remarkable sight and will avoid eye injuries, the MOA is sharing a few tips for safe viewing:

- **Get centered and enjoy the view.** Within the path of totality, you can safely witness the two or more minutes when the moon completely covers the sun with the naked eye. Otherwise, your eyes should always be protected by verified viewing tools. Never look directly at the sun without eye protection, even briefly. Visit eclipse.aas.org to access eclipse duration charts.
- **Know your duration.** Outside of the path of totality, always use solar filters. Mississippi's O.D.s want to reinforce that the only safe way to look directly at the uneclipsed or partially eclipsed sun is through special-purpose solar filters or other ISO-certified filters, such as "eclipse glasses" or handheld solar viewers. The MOA encourages ordering solar eclipse glasses in advance and recommends referring to the American Astronomical Society's (AAS) [site](#) for a list of manufacturers.
- **Be aware of harmful solar exposure.** If you stare at the sun without protection, you may experience damage to your retina (the tissue at the back of your eye) called "solar retinopathy." This damage can occur without any sensation of pain, since the retina does not have pain receptors. The injury can be temporary or permanent. Visit your local doctor of optometry immediately if an accident occurs.
- **Visit your doctor of optometry.** If you experience any problems with your eyes or vision after the eclipse, Mississippi's doctors of optometry will be able to provide you with the medical care you need. To locate a doctor in your community, go to <https://www.aoa.org/doctor-locator-search?tab=basic&sso=y>

To access additional information and educational materials on the solar eclipse, visit <https://www.aoa.org/Documents/public/AAS-Solar-Eclipse-Safety-v170210.pdf>

About the Mississippi Optometric Association (MOA):

The Mississippi Optometric Association, founded in 1947, represents more than 1,000 doctors of optometry, optometry students and paraoptometric assistants and technicians in 77 counties across the state. Optometrists examine, diagnose, treat and manage diseases and disorders of the visual system, the eye and associated structures as well as diagnose related systemic conditions. The mission of the profession of optometry is to fulfill the vision and eye care needs of the public through clinical care, research and education, all of which enhance the quality of life of patients.