

HAL Public Star Party Etiquette

HAL hosted star parties can be a lot of fun, and we encourage you to attend! Like most social gatherings there are some guidelines for acceptable behavior to help ensure everyone has a good time. *Please review the material below before arriving at the star party so that you are aware of our procedures.* If you have any questions, please ask the HAL Events Coordinator at events@howardastro.org.

HAL usually hosts a [public star party](#) once each month during the spring, summer and fall at Alpha Ridge Park. Everyone is welcome at a public star party, but we ask that *everyone* observe the following guidelines:

- ✓ Visitors are always welcome to look through any of the telescopes set up at a public star party! However, you should not touch the telescope when looking through it. (A good rule for small children is to have them put their hands behind their backs).
- ✓ Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. A star party is not a safe place to allow them to run around as there is a lot of delicate equipment and there can be dangling cords and other obstacles.
- ✓ When driving in the park after dusk, it is **mandatory** to use your headlights for safety! Visitors should park in the lighted parking area on the south side of the lot (away from the observatory area) and then walk over to the darkened area near the observatory where telescopes will be set up.
- ✓ Pets are not generally appropriate at a star party. If a pet must be brought along it should be kept leashed at all times and kept away from the observing area.
- ✓ No food or drink should be taken into the observing area or into the observatory. Smoking is not allowed by Howard County anywhere within Alpha Ridge Park.
- ✓ Dress appropriately – it can get chilly after the sun goes down and the stars come out, especially in the spring and fall.
- ✓ Feel free to use a flashlight as needed so that you are safe when walking about in the dark, but please keep it pointed at the ground and not at other people. A [“red” flashlight](#) is ideal for use at a star party and can be purchased online or at many stores.
- ✓ Public star parties run from dusk (which varies by season) until 11:00 PM.