
Only for Members & Guests

A key benefit to membership in the HAS is access to the Columbus Observing Site. Members may bring friends to the site at anytime, but the member is held responsible for the actions of their guests. If a large group plans to join you at the site, seek the aid of other members – call for HELP!

When you arrive...

- Close the gate, and reset the combination to “0000”
 - Drive slowly to minimize road dust.
 - Headlights OFF once you pass the entrance sign, follow Red entrance road lights.
 - Use your parking lights up to the picnic area, but PLEASE not on the field.
 - Do not drive over or park on Observing pads.
 - Ask someone to guide you in or out of the site if you need assistance.
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Preparing to Observe

- Choose an observing pad and setup your equipment. All pads (except the 2 large pads on the South arc) are on a first come, first serve basis.
NOTE: See “Pad Usage” on next page for use of the 2 larger (10’ x 10’) pads.
 - Tie your electric cords around the post before plugging into the poles. Route cords away from walk areas wherever possible to minimize trip hazards.
 - Laptops and electronic equipment should be covered with a “red screen” and positioned away from others to preserve our dark adaptation.
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Observing Etiquette

- Use (dim) red lights only! Warn others if you might leak white light!! No “Light Violations!”
 - Respect others’ equipment – don’t touch without asking.
 - Take care around extension cords, ladders, and equipment.
 - Don’t litter! Since we have no trash service, please take your trash home with you.
 - No smoking in other’s observing area & take your butts with you when you leave.
 - No smoking in the restrooms, bunkhouses and Observatory.
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Bad Behaviors

- No dangerous, rowdy, mischievous, intoxicated, obnoxious, or obscene conduct will be tolerated. Offenders will be required to leave the site immediately.
 - No hunting or shooting at any time. Use of fireworks is prohibited at the site.
 - No pets are allowed on the observing field, and no pets should roam freely on the site. Use a leash or pen to contain your pet. And, of course, please clean up after your pet.
 - Be aware that you are in the country out there and that there is wildlife present. Always keep an eye on children and don’t let them roam away without adult supervision.
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Camping – Tent / RV

- Only camp or park your RV in designated camping spots – NOT on the observing field!
 - Red “bug” or “mood” lights should be used in tents and RVs.
 - Daytime campfires must be contained in a fire ring or metal BBQ pit.
 - Open or nighttime campfires must be pre-approved by the Observatory Chairman.
 - Fees will apply for RV camping of longer than 10 days at a time. No RVs or other personal items may be left at the site without permission from Observatory Chairman.
NOTE: Please see the Observatory Chairman for details on RV policy.
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Before you leave...

- Pick up and remove your trash from the site! Please do not litter!
- Fill in a log report! The forms are in the box in the middle of the observing pads.
- Close all weather covers on electric boxes, replace freeze covers over water faucets, and ensure all buildings are closed and locked.
- You can only use white light during agreed “Light windows” – short breaks at midnight and 2am with Daylight Saving Time and 10pm and midnight otherwise. Refer to light Window policy below.

Pad Usage

- Pad Usage...**
- Vehicles should only be parked on the outside perimeter of each ring of concrete observing pads – vehicle placed to minimize interference with other observers.
 - NOTE: Vehicles may be parked by entrance or exit gates or along road in camping area.
 - Please park so that vehicle lights that cannot be disabled are pointing away from observing field (so that you don't blind others if you leave during the light window).
 - The 2 large concrete pads (10' x 10') are allocated in the following priority order to those:
 - (1) requiring extra space for mobility devices (wheel chairs, crutches, canes)
 - (2) who have reserved the pads in advance with the observatory scheduler, or
 - (3) with large (typically 18"+) telescopes.
 - No user should use more than one large pad at one time.
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- Important notes...**
- When sleeping at the site, sleep in the Picnic area, in your vehicle, in the bunkhouse or on a pad.
DO NOT sleep on the field itself (where others might trip over you in the dark).

Light Control Recommendations

Our light recommendations are for the enjoyment of everyone at the Observatory site. This recommendation is in effect from sunset to sunrise so as to not affect the dark adaptation of others on the field doing photography, CCD imaging or visual observing.

- Arriving before dark...**
- After choosing your pad, deactivate, cover, or red filter interior vehicle lights.
 - Store lights or fuses in a sealable container so as not to lose them in the grass or vehicle.
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- Arriving after dark...**
- Please deactivate, cover, or red filter interior vehicle lights before entering open field area. You can either...
- Park in the entrance gate area and tote your equipment to a pad, or...
 - Turn off Headlights after Entrance welcome sign and use parking lights only along North road (if needed). Follow red road lights to the opening of the field on North road.
 - When turning south along the Picnic road, turn off parking lights completely.
 - Stop at the observing field and look for a pad to use. If needed, have someone lead you to a pad.
 - DO NOT back up to a pad unless backup lights are deactivated!!!
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- Things to bring...**
- Mosquito spray/lotion (spray to be applied away from all telescopes)
 - 50' of electrical extension cord
 - Multiple outlet or power strip
 - Hair dryer (for dew), small fan (for comfort)
 - Chair, table, and observing accessories.
 - Food and Drinks
 - Clothing for the Weather
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Bathroom Instructions

Light usage...

- Enter bathroom and lock door behind you.
 - On opposite wall, press button #1.
 - Only press button #2 if you want white lights to turn on!!
 - When exiting bathroom...make sure door is fully unlocked when you leave!!.
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Hot water heater...

- Press hot water heater button and wait about 30 minutes for hot water.
 - Hot water heater will stay on for approx. 4 hours.
 - HINT: Take quick showers due to small hot water tank.
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Bathroom supplies...

- There is toilet paper and paper towels in the center storage room that is accessed from the East bathroom.
 - If the red light is out in the bathroom, then replace with a new one. Spare bulbs are located on the shelf in the center storage room.
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Male Bunkhouse

Bunkhouse usage...

- Located closest to the Exit road by the picnic area..
 - Entrance door is on the Picnic area side of the building.
 - Press "**1245**" into the keypad on the door and then enter bunkhouse.
 - To activate the Air Conditioner/Heater, go to the back wall and press the black button on top panel. This will also activate the white light circuit.
 - Button press is good for about 5 – 6 hours. When timer runs out, press the black button to re-activate circuits.
 - Check this web page calendar at the bottom to see what beds have been previously reserved. <https://www.astronomyhouston.org/about/has-observatory>
 - To reserve a bunk bed, send an email to: HASBooking@astronomyhouston.org. Any unreserved bunks are available on a "first come, first serve" basis.
 - Bring a pillow and blanket or sleeping bag.
 - No food shall be stored, prepared or eaten in the bunkhouse. This is to eliminate insects and rodents from being attracted to the bunkhouse.
 - When leaving, sweep and clean up and take any trash with you.
 - Turn off Air Conditioner/Heater and all lights.
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Female Bunkhouse

Bunkhouse usage...

- Located on the east side as the road turns to the observing field.
 - Female side entrance is on the north side of the building.
 - There are 2 single beds and 2 folding cots.
 - Check this web page calendar at the bottom to see what beds have been previously reserved. <https://www.astronomyhouston.org/about/has-observatory>
 - To reserve a bunk bed, send an email to: HASBooking@astronomyhouston.org. Any unreserved bunks are available on a “first come, first serve” basis.
- When contacting HASBooking, you will be given the current access code for the door.
- Press the access code into the keypad on the door and then enter bunkhouse.
 - To activate the Air Conditioner/Heater, use the panel on the unit.
 - Bring a pillow and blanket or sleeping bag.
 - No food shall be stored, prepared or eaten in the bunkhouse. This is to eliminate insects and rodents from being attracted to the bunkhouse.
 - When leaving, sweep and clean up and take any trash with you.
 - Turn off Air Conditioner/Heater, fan and all lights.
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Family Bunkhouse

Bunkhouse usage...

- Located on the east side as the road turns to the observing field.
 - Family side entrance is to the east by the wood deck.
 - There are 2 single beds and 2 folding cots.
 - Check this web page calendar at the bottom to see if this bunkhouse has been previously reserved. <https://www.astronomyhouston.org/about/has-observatory>
 - To reserve this bunkhouse, send an email to: HASBooking@astronomyhouston.org. If this bunkhouse is not reserved, then it is available on a “first come, first serve” basis.
 - Press “**1245**” into the keypad on the door and then enter bunkhouse.
 - Bring a pillow and blanket or sleeping bag.
 - No food shall be stored, prepared or eaten in the bunkhouse. This is to eliminate insects and rodents from being attracted to the bunkhouse.
 - When leaving, sweep and clean up and take any trash with you.
 - Turn off Air Conditioner/Heater, fan and all lights.
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Picnic Area

Picnic Area use...

- There are Bar-B-Que pits in the picnic area that you can use during the daytime only.
 - All Bar-B-Que fires must be fully extinguished by the end of twilight.
 - Use extreme care to prevent grass and forest fires.
 - Sleeping in vehicles is permitted in the picnic area.
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Light Window Policy

This section covers the policy for light window usage during all periods of operation, including prime night. A “light window” is defined as a 10-minute observing break to allow users to use white light (i.e. headlights) as they leave the site.

Light Windows

- Only two ten minute light windows will normally be available:
 - **Midnight** all year long... and ...
 - **10:00pm** during Central Standard Time (i.e., “winter”)
 - **2:00am** during Central Daylight Time (i.e., “summer”)
 - If you don't plan to spend the night, please take advantage of one of the light windows.
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How a light window works...

- If you need a light window...
- Make an announcement on the observing field to everyone
 - at least 30 minutes prior to the light window...and...
 - 10 minutes prior to the light window...and...
 - immediately before the light window.
 - The purpose of these announcements is to allow everyone to prepare for the window (either to prepare to leave or to protect their night vision and photographs).
 - The simple goal...**NO SURPRISES!**
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Light Rule Exceptions...

- If everyone at the site agrees that there will be no observing...
...then light rules may be suspended.
 - Ask others at the site if you have any questions or concerns ...
...they may allow you to use a different time for a light window to exit the site.
 - If there is a medical emergency...a safety hazard...or other urgent conditions requiring white light, try to warn others before you expose others to white lights.
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Your responsibility

- Warn before any white lights are turned on!
 - Exit quickly, quietly, safely, and with only the lights you require...
...within the 10 minute window!
 - PLEASE...Be considerate!
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NOTES:

Emergency Contacts?

- Observatory Director – Chris Ober – 210-410-9161
- Assistant Observatory Director – Steve Goldberg 713-385-4072
- Previous Observatory Director – Mike Edstrom - 832-689-4584

Site Gate Combination?

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- The Gate combination is for HAS Members only. Do not give out to non-members.