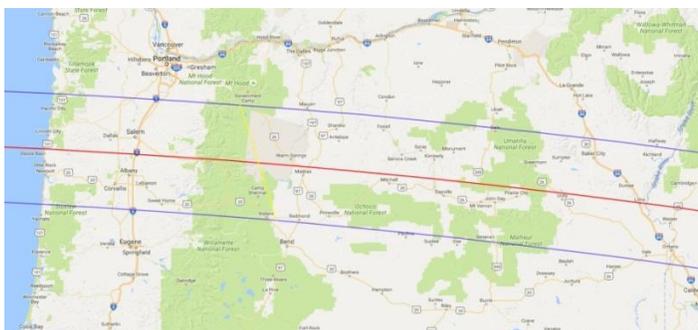




## Aug. 21, 2017 Eclipse: A traveler's FAQ

*Arrive early; stay put; leave late: This is NOT a game day event*

ODOT is planning ahead to keep Oregon moving, and we encourage you to do the same. An estimated 1 million people will be in Oregon's path of totality to view the celestial dance overhead. That many people will have a huge impact on highways, gasoline supplies, cell tower networks and emergency response capabilities. All travelers have a shared responsibility to keep themselves safe during their travels. What you do to plan ahead will make or break your eclipse experience.



- This is NOT a college football game day experience. **Please treat this 3-hour event like a 3-DAY event**, because of the very heavy traffic expected from as many as 1 million people. This could be the biggest traffic event in Oregon's history. **Arrive early; stay put; leave late!**

### When should I arrive?

Early enough so you're not part of the last-minute crowd, which could cause gridlock on the highways that Monday morning. Please treat this 3-hour event as a 3-DAY event due to traffic considerations. We expect traffic will be longer, more crowded and busier than **ANY** college football game day.

### Can I park on the highway shoulder?

Use the shoulder for emergency stopping only. Don't park there to do anything else. Motorists who consider parking on highway shoulders during the eclipse may risk a fine—and worse:

- You could start a fire. August is high fire season. Vehicle exhaust and dry vegetation is a dangerous combination.
- You're contributing to extreme congestion that is already expected, especially on narrow, two-lane highways.
- You're encouraging others to do the same. Emergency vehicles need this space to respond to emergencies. Imagine how you would feel if it were your loved ones they couldn't reach because the shoulder was blocked.
- You're putting your own life at risk and the lives of others. Lots of traffic and an eclipse add to the distractions!

### When should I leave afterwards?

One of our biggest concerns is the size of the crowd that expects to be able to travel Oregon's highways immediately after the eclipse is over. Most of the rural highways are two-lane roads. Avoid gridlock and endless lines of cars trying to leave at the same time. Better to wait somewhere cool (with restrooms)!

### **What should I bring?**

Everything you'll need if you're stuck on the road for many hours: Water, food, a full tank of gas, any needed medications; an emergency kit, games for your passengers; sunscreen; hats to protect you from the sun; eclipse glasses. Is your vehicle ready for such a trip? Be prepared for hot weather and fire season by including a shovel and a fire extinguisher. Mid-August in Oregon is often in the 80s.

### **What should I do to plan ahead?**

First, realize the potential for the heaviest traffic Oregon has ever experienced: About 1 million people could be in the path of totality. What can you do to avoid crowded roads? Our advice: Arrive early; stay put; leave late. Treat this 3-hour event as a 3-DAY event.

Visit [TripCheck.com](http://TripCheck.com) for information on road and weather conditions, incidents and traffic delays. Links to cameras give real-time views of road conditions. The site also provides links to bus, train and airport information, as well as lodging restaurants, attractions and other traveler services. Reports are updated continuously and available 24 hours a day. You can also call 511 for road conditions (503-588-2941 out of state).



### **What highways will be closed?**

It's our intent to keep all highways open. But very heavy traffic may slow things down so they seem closed. Expect traffic changes. We may restrict some left turns to and from highways in order to keep traffic moving. Cities and counties may choose to do the same, especially around venues with many visitors. Be prepared for difficult driving conditions. Give yourself plenty of time to get to your destination: Arrive early to avoid the crowds coming to the eclipse, and leave late to avoid the crowds of people leaving immediately afterwards. ODOT will have trucks spread across the system to respond to road hazards and roadside emergencies.

### **Besides traffic, what should I be concerned about?**

Heat and wildfires are right at the top of our list of concerns. Temperatures are often in the 80s in August, and hotter in Central and Eastern Oregon. If you're outside or stuck in heavy traffic in the heat and bright sun, be prepared: Do you have enough water? Sunscreen? A hat? Know the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The Oregon Health Authority advises: Stay cool, stay hydrated and stay informed.

Wildfires are a constant threat this time of year, especially outside the Willamette Valley. August is part of Oregon's wildfire season. The Oregon Department of Forestry advises: Close your windows to smoke. Follow evacuation signs if they're posted. Don't light fires or build campfires if they're prohibited! Don't let your vehicle start a wildfire. Avoid driving or parking on dry grass. Carry a fire extinguisher, water and a shovel.

### **Can I camp in a highway rest area?**

No. Rest areas are for short-term use.

### **What's your general traveling advice?**

Carry a paper map: Cell service may be spotty. Plan your route with your bodily needs in mind: Plan to get to where you need to be before you need to go! Rest areas and restaurants are good places to regroup and re-plan. But don't camp overnight in them!

### **What highways will fill up the most?**

Any road that takes you into the path of totality will experience heavy traffic. And most city streets in cities inside the path of totality will see heavier traffic and limited parking spaces. Expect heavy traffic and possibly major delays—even gridlock—on I-5, I-84, U.S. 20, U.S. 26, U.S. 30, U.S. 95, U.S. 97, U.S. 101, U.S. 395, OR 6, OR 18, OR 22, OR 58, and OR 126.

### **What about work zones?**

Many highway construction work zones in the path of totality will stop work in the days around the eclipse. But by their very nature, work zones are still dangerous because they often have narrower lanes or extra curves around work areas. So please exercise great caution in those areas—slow down and leave extra room, and make sure you stay in your lane.

### **I run a business and I need workers that day. What can I do? How can workers get to work that day?**

We've been encouraging employers and employees to sit down together and make a plan well ahead of time! If your business is a service provider and visitors are your customers, then of course you need staff to work. Can they arrive early? Is there a place for them to stay, if leaving becomes difficult? If you're not providing a direct service to visitors, can your employees work from home, carpool or work different hours?

### **How will big freight trucks get through Oregon in the days around the eclipse?**

Probably very slowly, just like everyone else. We've banned over-width vehicles – loads wider than 8-feet, 6 inches – for the few days around the eclipse, and we've warned motor carrier companies that their drivers should expect delays and heavy congestion on Oregon highways. Each trucking company will make its own decision about whether and when to travel through Oregon during the days around the eclipse. Some, of course, will have no choice, because they're delivering the food, gasoline and other products visitors and citizens will need during this time!

### **I came all this way to see the total eclipse, and I'm worried I might be stuck in traffic!**

Can you change your plans to arrive earlier? If you're on the road during the eclipse, realize that you might be surrounded by a lot of distracted drivers! Look out, not up: Don't look at the sun while driving. Don't drive with your eclipse glasses on—you won't be able to see where you're going. Don't stop on the highway or shoulder to view the eclipse. Don't block traffic. And don't walk on the highway!



*May 20, 2012 solar eclipse photo courtesy Ryan Franklin*

### **How many hours from A to B (pick your travel route)?**

Longer than normal—maybe *much* longer. No one really knows. What we do know: You must be prepared for long traffic delays. Oregon is expecting quite a crowd! If everyone tries to arrive or leave at the same time, the sheer number of vehicles will overwhelm the capacity of the roadways. That's why we've asked you to plan ahead and arrive early; stay put; and leave late. Treat this 3-hour event as a 3-DAY event.

### **What can I do in Oregon while waiting for the crowds to pass through?**

We don't have enough space here to tell you all the many amazing wonders of Oregon! The coast; the valley; the mountains; the wine country; the volcanic fields. We could go on and on. Visit [www.TravelOregon.com](http://www.TravelOregon.com) to find out about Oregon's 7 wonders.

### **How can I stay informed about the latest travel conditions and other things I should know?**

Tripcheck.com is your one-stop shopping for road information, with more than 400 highway cameras to help you see your planned route ahead of time. TripCheck makes it possible for you to know before you go. You can get the same information in audio format by calling 511 and following the prompts. You can call 211 for specific eclipse-related issues from August 18 through August 22. Please reserve 911 for life-threatening emergencies. That's not the number to call to ask for information.

### **Will there be many eclipse gatherings around the state?**

Yes, we've logged more than 150 events planned for public and private property. They're being held at fairgrounds, campgrounds, wineries, forests, ranches, schools, recreation areas and parks. We have reports of people marking the eclipse while river rafting, skydiving or in hot air balloons. Some of the events will be quite large, like the Symbiosis event in the Ochoco National Forest which is expecting 30,000 people. Others will number in the thousands, hundreds and dozens.

### **What is ODOT doing to address the expected congestion?**

ODOT is taking several steps to keep roads moving as freely as possible.

- Some truck scale locations may be closed and used as staging areas for law enforcement and other emergency response vehicles. (This won't affect rest areas, which will be open.)
- Incident Response trucks and maintenance personal will be placed in locations where the heaviest traffic is expected.
- Hundreds of extra roadside reader boards will be deployed at key locations to warn drivers of congestion and delays.
- [www.TripCheck.com](http://www.TripCheck.com) will be updated 24/7 to make sure motorists have real time information about road problems.
- The ODOT Twitter feed ([www.twitter.com/OregonDOT](http://www.twitter.com/OregonDOT)) will send out frequent advisories on road conditions. Please note, this is not monitored 24/7. Use TripCheck.com for conditions around the clock.
- Flaggers will be positioned at key intersections where left turns may cause delays.
- ODOT has warned trucking companies around the country to expect delays and congestion in the days before and after the eclipse.

