

General site rules

The main rule is to respect yourself and those around you. We want everyone to have a wonderful time.

- Take care of yourself, your belongings and have fun!
- Close the gate at all times, and make sure it is hooked.
- Only use the road that goes directly to the site.
- Do not break branches off the trees – they grow slowly.
- Do not throw bottles in general bins, put them in the bins marked “Bottles”.
- No fires on the grass – only in provided drums.
- Only sleep in designated camping areas or on the beds in the houses.
- House residents: Furniture may not be moved or removed from the house.
- No loud music.

Lights

As astronomers we want to see celestial light. This means eliminating light pollution. Here’s the rules with regard to light at the Southern Star Party:

- Bright lights at night are strictly forbidden. The reason the Southern Star Party is held far from the city is so that we can enjoy a dark sky and allow our eyes to adapt to the dark. A normal torch, cell phone display, or other bright light will ruin your precious night vision.
- Head lamps typically sold at camping shops are not allowed to be used after dark – they are much too bright and you often have to cycle through a white light setting to switch on and off.
- No fires after sunset.
- No white light after sunset. A very dim red light is all you need to see with at night once you are dark adapted.
- If you want to use your camera outside the specially marked “Astrophotography” area, please switch off your LCD display and cover it when you have to use it. A big black towel or even a jacket could be pulled over the camera and your head to prevent the light spilling and disturbing others.
- No cars may be driven on the site after sunset and before sunrise. If you plan on leaving during the evening, you must park in allocated areas away from the observing area and walk up to the site. Please do not use your car alarm during the night if you are parked within the site borders. Switch off all car cabin lights. If your boot light cannot switch off, please “red proof” it with red cellophane so that it only emits dim red light.

Please note: Red light can also affect your dark adaption, so keep it dim. A suitable solution is to use a simple cheap torch with layers of red cellophane taped to the front (you can also coat the bulb with red nail varnish). Guideline: if you shine it on your star maps during the day and you can see the light, it is too bright.

Green lasers

Green laser pointers are excellent tools for pointing out stars & constellations, and for use as a finder to locate deep sky objects with your telescope. They are also potentially dangerous. Make sure you meet the relevant registration/licensing requirements for your laser. A bright green lasers can also affect your night vision and show up in astro-imaging, so please use them sparingly.

- Keep it 5mW or below
- Never point at people, aircraft, animals or any surfaces
- Be careful of obstacles
- Warn people that you are going to use a laser
- Use only when needed
- Stand still while using it
- Keep away from children

Please note: The Laser Safety Officer can request that you abide to these and other relevant laser rules. If you do not comply, he/she may take your laser for safe keeping and return it upon your departure.

Things to keep in mind

- cell phone reception is non-existent to very poor (SMSs likely to work, though)
- the nearest shop is 20km away
- braai drums are available and we will supply wood for braai on both days.
- please supply own wood if you’d like to braai privately.
- bring a fold-up table for use at your telescope/binoculars.
- you do not have to attend all the presentations & talks! Feel free to attend only those that are of interest to you.
- there will be a Telescope Field area marked off for setting up telescopes and binoculars. It is critical that this area be kept as dark as possible. You may prefer to leave your telescope there during the day (remember to provide it with some kind of dust cover / sun screen).
- there will be a Astrophotography Area marked off for setting up equipment for photography. Taking astrophotos generally creates light spill which hampers night vision, so please keep this in mind.
- there will be a For Sale table. Bring gadgets, books, telescopes etc. for display. Mark each item with your name and the price you are asking
- if you’re a member of an astronomical society or centre, why not bring along your organisation’s flag or banner for proud display at the SSP!

Important phone numbers: Dr Braam Esterhuizen, Bonnievale (023-616-3315); ER24 Ambulance (080-022-559); Robertson Hospital (023-626-8040); Worcester MediClinic (023-348-1724)