



Eastern Idaho Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eastern Idaho Public Health Feverishly Planning for the Solar Eclipse What you need to know to stay safe and healthy

(SE Idaho) - Like many other agencies throughout the region and state, Eastern Idaho Public Health (EIPH) is busily planning and preparing for the total solar eclipse, which is set to appear on August 21, 2017. All EIPH office locations except for Lemhi County will be closed on August 21. Our planning efforts revolve around some of the core public health services we provide the community including food and drinking water safety, proper disposal of sewage and solid waste (trash), and personal preparedness. This health and safety information is valuable to local community members, businesses, and individuals coming into the region to view the eclipse.

Food Safety

If you are planning to serve/provide food at any eclipse related events in the community, it is important that you call EIPH as soon as possible to see if you will need a temporary food license or an exemption form. Licenses will not be issued unless the application is received at least two weeks prior to the event (by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 4) to allow for proper inspection and processing time. Please call our Environmental Health Division at 523-5382 with any questions.

If you are a consumer eating food at a public/community event, it is recommended that you choose vendors in which their food license or exemption form is prominently displayed. This will ensure that the food vendor has gone through the proper channels and is equipped and prepared to serve food safely.

Drinking Water Safety

If you are hosting people or events on your property and providing drinking water from a private source/well, proper care should be taken to ensure the drinking water is safe. Private well owners are encouraged to conduct bacteria and nitrate testing routinely and prior to the distribution of water at any event. A list of certified water testing labs can be found by following the eclipse link on our website: www.EIPH.Idaho.gov.

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Disposal of Sewage

The proper disposal of sewage is imperative to protect the public from infectious diseases and prevent contamination of the environment, especially ground water. The volume of people that are predicted to be coming into the region will tax septic systems. Therefore, it is recommended that property owners (individuals and businesses) that use septic systems assess their system and determine if it needs to be pumped before the event to avoid overloading it. In addition, if you will be providing portable sanitation units (porta-potties) for an event or for guests on your property, those units will need to be pumped regularly.

Both septic systems and porta-potties must be pumped and serviced by a sewage pumper with appropriate equipment and licensed in the State of Idaho. A list of permitted septic tank pumpers can be found by following the eclipse link on our website: www.EIPH.Idaho.gov. If you would like to become a permitted septic tank pumper, please call our Environmental Health division at 208-523-5382 to start that process. Also, if you are hosting multiple guests on your property and are not able to obtain porta-potties, please contact EIPH for other sewage disposal options.

Disposal of Solid Waste/Trash

Event planning must have proper procedures in place for the collection, storage, transportation, and disposal of all solid waste. When feasible, to reduce the burden on our landfills, recycling programs should be considered.

Safety and Preparedness

It is not safe to look directly at the sun. If you plan to view the eclipse, plan to wear ISO certified eclipse-viewing glasses or use an alternate indirect method of viewing. Unfiltered rays from the sun can cause permanent eye damage and even blindness.

Please use caution when in the outdoors, as there are a variety of critters that can be dangerous including bats, snakes, bears, ticks, and mosquitos. Bats and snakes should be left alone, and if you do have an encounter with one, seek medical attention immediately. Use insect repellent and wear long-sleeve shirts and pants to keep mosquitoes and ticks away from your skin.

August in Idaho is usually hot and excessive exposure to the sun or one severe sunburn in childhood can lead to skin cancer. Please apply SPF 30 sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going outside and apply at least every 2 hours. Also, seek shade whenever possible and wear protective clothing, if possible.

With the massive influx of people coming into the community, it is encouraged to have an adequate supply of food and water in your home and make sure your automobile is full of gas as lines at gas stations will be long and gasoline may become short in supply. It is also recommended to have cash available as ATMs may be drained and with internet service being overloaded, debit and credit cards machines may not function properly. Traffic will be increased which will result in travel delays. Also, have a first-aid kit on hand, as it will take longer than usual for EMS to respond to 911 calls.