



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

Andy Beshear, Governor

Jim Gray, Secretary

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### **Kentuckians Urged to Plan Now for Memorable and Safe Total Solar Eclipse Next Week**

*Be prepared for influx of visitors and heavy traffic for April 8 event*

**PADUCAH, Ky. (April 3, 2024)** – With the moon’s shadow less than a week away from dazzling spectators across Kentucky and a dozen other states, residents and businesses in prime viewing destinations are encouraged to prepare, along with the influx of travelers planning to take in the sight.

“If you’re going to be one of the hundreds of thousands traveling to, or through, the commonwealth to watch what will be a spectacular show, we want you to make your trip a safe and memorable one,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “Pick your destination, travel smart, come early and stay late.”

The total solar eclipse will sweep across the middle of the United States on April 8, with totality starting around 2 p.m. CDT, in parts of 12 western Kentucky counties.

The celestial event is expected to bring at least 150,000 visitors to those counties, with more than 1 million travelers predicted to drive through Kentucky to nearby viewing spots along the eclipse path in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.

Area residents are advised to perform routine activities, like fueling up and grocery shopping, ahead of the event weekend. Businesses are encouraged to plan fuel and goods deliveries outside of peak daytime travel times.

Heavier than normal traffic could occur the weekend before the eclipse, especially near viewing areas in Hickman, Carlisle, Ballard, McCracken, Livingston, Crittenden, Union and Henderson counties. The most significant traffic rush is expected after the eclipse ends there and along Kentucky’s north-south highways as eclipse watchers head home.

“We want people to take in this incredible event, but we also want them to be prepared for potential heavy traffic as everyone heads to and from the main eclipse corridor,” said Transportation Secretary Jim Gray. “We have some simple suggestions for visitors: Arrive early and pack the essentials such as water, eclipse glasses and plenty of patience for navigating crowded highways.”

Preparing for a massive influx of travelers, Kentucky transportation, emergency management, and other state and local agencies have been working together over the last month to plan for potential event impacts. Tips have been issued for businesses, cross-country travelers, truckers and local residents, including:

**Plan ahead.** Pick out a spot to view the eclipse in advance. Check out the Kentucky Tourism website for some local events. Ideally, choose sites that have adequate parking and access to restrooms and restaurants or other food sources within walking distance.

**Be prepared.** Similar to a winter snow storm, fill up or charge up before you leave and make sure you pack the essentials. That includes food and water as there may be long lines at fuel stops and other retailers or long traffic delays. Businesses should stock up on staples, and commercial truck drivers should consider their routes based on eclipse timing.

**Drive smart.** Wear seat belts and avoid distracted driving. Remember not to stop along highways. Vehicles on the shoulder hinder traffic flow and create a traffic hazard. You are likely to encounter slow-moving traffic. Be prepared to adapt if a traffic crash or other incident forces you to change travel routes, but avoid detouring down backroads.

**Come early, stay late.** After the eclipse, it will be like leaving after the big game – give yourself plenty of time for the return journey. The Transportation Cabinet is lifting work zone lane restrictions where possible, and will staff high-traffic corridors to help reroute travelers or respond to traffic issues if needed. But, sticking around will ease some of the traffic as well as give you a chance to take in local attractions and events.

Eclipse chasers are expected to start arriving around Friday, April 5, and then continue to filter in with a final surge on the morning of April 8. Based on traffic patterns seen during the 2017 total solar eclipse that also swept across Kentucky, initial congestion was light as visitors traveled to the eclipse path over several days. However, heavy traffic surges occurred when visitors made their return trip.

On April 8, motorists should be prepared for several hours of post-eclipse traffic congestion along north-south routes across Kentucky and potentially at Ohio River crossings. Traffic is likely to impact the Cincinnati and Louisville region April 8 at evening rush hour.

In addition, heavy traffic is expected along key highways in western Kentucky and interstates leading to eclipse viewing areas north of Kentucky, such as Interstate 24, Interstate 69, U.S. 41, Pennyriple Parkway, Interstate 165 and others. Kentucky is the closest site of totality for southern states so watch for traffic impacts along Interstate 65, Interstate 64 (especially in Louisville), Interstate 71 and Interstate 75.

One way to minimize backups is to delay return travel for several hours, or until the initial traffic surge starts to clear.

KYTC personnel will be stationed at key interchanges and pinch points to monitor traffic. Portable message boards will direct traffic to alternate routes when needed.

Travelers should consider monitoring Waze for congested traffic ahead and be prepared to reroute to avoid delays.

In addition, real-time traffic updates for Kentucky will be available online at [bit.ly/kytc24eclipse](http://bit.ly/kytc24eclipse) on April 8, as well as spectator, travel, and pilot tips. Kentucky traffic info is available at [GoKY.ky.gov](http://GoKY.ky.gov) to help plan your route.

Additional eclipse planning resources are available at the following sites:

<http://www.kentuckytourism.com/eclipse/eclipseevents.aspx>

<http://www.GreatAmericanEclipse.com>

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