

How the Eclipse May Affect Your Business

While it is unknown just how many people will visit St. Joseph for the Total Solar Eclipse, St. Joseph has been getting national attention as a prime viewing spot, being the fifth largest city along the path of totality. Various locations in St. Joseph have been reserved for more than a year from around the globe.

With the city's largest festival falling the weekend before the Eclipse on Monday, it is safe to assume more visitors will be in St. Joseph than normal over that four-day period. Businesses should prepare in different ways. Restaurants, gas stations, and other visitor serving businesses should communicate with vendors to ensure adequate supplies, employers should consider staffing levels, and manufacturers should consider transportation plans.

Restaurants & Retail

- **Credit card machines may or may not work.** Come up with alternative options.
- **Make sure your assets are secure.** If you are allowing employees outside to view the eclipse ensure that your business is empty and merchandise/money are secured.
- **Talk to your vendors.** Order enough inventory to account for more visitors during the weekend before the eclipse. Delivery trucks may not be able to get to your business the day of the eclipse. Be prepared beforehand.

Large Businesses

- **Will your employees be able to get to work on time?** Increased traffic may affect bus routes and congestion on roadways.
- **Consider staffing levels.** Who is considered essential vs. non-essential?
- **Will trucks be able to get to and from your business/manufacturing center?** Will major events at Rosecrans Memorial Airport and various parts of the city affect traffic along Interstate 29 & Highway 36?

General Business Tips

- If you have a flexible appointment schedule **consider not scheduling appointments for that day.** There will be more road congestion and foot traffic, so plan accordingly.
- **Cell phones may not work.** You may want to make alternative communications plan with employees, family and friends.
- If you are thinking about having a **public watch event,** check with your insurance company and make sure you are covered. You also need to contact the City of St. Joseph Special Events Coordinator Kim Hurt at 816-271-4757 for proper permits. Be prepared to discuss your plans in detail. You must submit an event application early but no later than Tuesday, July 18th at 5pm.
- Pre-warn customers a week or two in advance about your plans. **Will your hours be affected?** Put a sign on the door to your business.
- Make sure you have **contingency plans** in place.
- **Consider staffing levels.** Most schools are closed, will your staff be staying home?
- **Stay informed:** Have your car or battery operated radio programmed to any of our four local station, including KFEQ 980AM, KKJO 105.5FM, ESPN 1550FM, QCountry 92.7FM. They'll be live broadcasting traffic info, news and commentary of the Eclipse throughout the day.
- **Emergency 911 or *55** from a cell phone may be affected with the increased number of people in town during the weekend. Call the St. Joseph non-emergency number (816) 271-4777 to report a non-life threatening issue. Or call 816-271-6558 to request an ambulance.
- **Parking** could be an issue for both employees and customers, especially in areas where people may be gathering to watch the eclipse. If you have a private lot or area for employees or customers to park, please make sure it is well-marked with visible signs, so visitors will not use your lot improperly.
- Because your employees may encounter many people who are **seeking information** about eclipse viewing areas, need directions to various places, please keep them informed with schedules, maps or other items, especially since internet or GPS connections could be interrupted. **Solar Eclipse Guides** are available for you to pass out to visitors and includes this information.
- You and your employees may find it challenging to leave and come back during **lunch or dinner breaks** in the week and day of the Eclipse. Encourage them to bring sack lunches or consider placing an order for food to be brought in (which likely will need to be arranged a couple of weeks in advance).



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