

The idea of emergency preparedness is to be ready for something that may not in fact happen. A little planning ahead can significantly improve outcomes during an intense event. Vermont emergency planners are expecting up to 160,000 visitors coming to Vermont to experience the April 8th solar Eclipse. This influx of so many people over a few days, and moreso their likely departure nearly all at once, may create traffic jams and cause communication problems as our cell phone networks become congested. Here in Brandon, we are preparing for these possibilities. Here's some information to help you prepare for Brandon's Eclipse weekend (April 5-8).

1 Prepare Ahead of Time (things you can do the week before the Eclipse)

- *Sign up for Eclipse alerts from the State of Vermont: text VTECLIPSE to 888-777
- *Get reliable information from the State of Vermont: <https://www.vermont.gov/eclipse>
- *Try to buy a few days' extra worth of your groceries, pet food, and any necessary medicines; this will help you avoid both crowds and possible shortages of commodities (but don't hoard!)
- *Offer a helping hand to neighbors who may not be able to do these things on their own

2 Making Your Way Around Town (planned road closures, traffic lights)

- *The selectboard has authorized closing Carver St from the railroad crossing south to the Otter Creek bridge (likely to be muddy); this will be a full closure at both ends.
- *Should conditions warrant, Long Swamp Rd from Short Swamp Rd to the Sudbury line will be posted closed as if for high water. Residents may travel to and from their homes as usual if safe to do so.
- *Stone Mill Dam Rd may also be closed to through traffic. Residents may travel to and from their homes as usual if safe to do so.
- *Police will override the traffic lights in the center of town on Monday afternoon/evening and station officers to direct traffic in order to facilitate flushing southbound traffic as efficiently as safely possible
- *Try to stay home or walk your errands if you can, particularly Monday afternoon/evening right after the Eclipse

3 Emergency Operations Center: a place to report problems or get assistance

- *The Town will stand up its emergency operations center (EOC) at the town office on Monday, April 8th. If you experience a problem, you can call (802-247-3635) or come to this EOC. A backup number is emergency director Seth Hopkins (802-247-3300).

4 The Aftermath

- *The most likely period of congestion is Monday April 8th, 4pm to 10pm, as many Eclipse visitors decide to start their drive home at nearly the same time.
- *We are partnering with the American Legion at 550 Franklin Street to open from 4PM until dissipation of traffic as a "comfort station" with restrooms. Our thanks to Aaron Tucker and our friends at the American Legion. The phone at the Legion is (802) 247-5709

The Eclipse is one of those events in which preparedness may turn out to have been imperative, or it may appear afterwards to have been unnecessary (Y2K). It is at minimum a good drill/exercise opportunity, and if the traffic volume matches fair-skies forecasts, it may be absolutely prudent.

By focusing on planning and preparedness, Brandon residents and guests can look forward to a smooth day and an opportunity to enjoy this wonderful and rare Eclipse event in Brandon.