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Solar Eclipse Safety: American Optometric Association and the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists Encourages Safe and Fun Viewing of August Eclipse

On August 21, a total solar eclipse will touch the U.S. mainland for the first time since 1979. As the eclipse makes its path across the country, it will not directly pass through Massachusetts. Tens of millions of people who live within a 70-mile radius of its cross-country track will witness the eclipse in totality (the sun completely blocked by the moon) while millions of others outside of it will enjoy a partial eclipse, Massachusetts will view a 63% eclipse. The American Optometric Association (AOA) and the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists (MSO), is urging the public to view the eclipse with proper eye protection to avoid any temporary or permanent eye damage from the sun.

To ensure spectators won't miss the remarkable sight, the AOA/MSO is sharing a few tips for safe viewing:

- **Get centered and enjoy the view.** Within the path of totality, you can safely witness the two or more minutes when the moon completely covers the sun with the naked eye. Otherwise, your eyes should always be protected by verified viewing tools. Never look directly at the sun without eye protection, even briefly. Visit eclipse.aas.org to access eclipse duration charts.
- **Know your duration.** Outside of the path of totality, always use solar filters. Optometrists want to reinforce that the only safe way to look directly at the unclipped or partially eclipsed sun is through special-purpose solar filters or other ISO-certified filters, such as "eclipse glasses" or handheld solar viewers. The AOA/MSO encourages ordering solar eclipse glasses in advance and recommends referring to the American Astronomical Society's (AAS) website for a list of manufacturers.
- **Be aware of harmful solar exposure.** If you stare at the sun without protection, you may experience damage to your retina (the tissue at the back of your eye) called "solar retinopathy." This damage can occur without any sensation of pain, since the retina does not have pain receptors. The injury can be temporary or permanent. Visit your local doctor of optometry immediately if an accident occurs.
- **Visit your doctor of optometry.** Check in with your optometrist for information about safely viewing the eclipse. If you experience any problems with your eyes or vision after the eclipse, an optometrist will be able to provide you with the medical care you need.

If you have any questions or need additional information please feel free to contact the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists 508.875.7900. You can also access additional information and educational materials on the solar eclipse by visiting aoa.org/2017eclipse.



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