

Regarding the Use of the St. Croix Observatory (SCO) during COVID-19

Effective March 01, 2022

Given the current status of COVID-19 and the provincial requirements for physical distancing, requirements have been developed for the safe use of our dark-sky observatory by all members wishing to enjoy the night skies.

These precautions are in place to protect both you and those with you at the facility. They will change as the provincial restrictions change.

March 07 – March 20 (Phase 2):

1. No more than 15 people may be on site at SCO at any one time with or without social distancing.
 - Masks are recommended outdoors any time that 2-metre distancing is not possible.
 - Masks are required indoors as described below.
2. Members must announce their intention to go to SCO through the RASC Halifax Centre Discussion List.
 - Include the date of the evening you are planning to attend in the subject line. For example, **Going to SCO, June 20 @ 8 PM**
 - In your email, include the number of other people also going out with you.
 - Check the list to determine how many have said they were going to SCO that evening.
 - If 15 people have already expressed their intention to go, do not go.
3. The Warm Room and Roll-off Observatory may be used.
 - No more than 3 people in the Warm Room at any one time, with masks.
 - No more than 4 people in the Roll-off Observatory at any one time, with masks.
 - If lens fogging is a problem, masks may be temporarily removed from the nose for the duration of the task, provided no one is within 2 metres.
 - The 2-metre physical distancing requirement should be followed as much as possible.
 - The Thurlow Binoculars with parallelogram mount and all SCO eye pieces cannot be used due to challenges of on-site sanitization.
 - The 16" Dobsonian may be used provided you bring your own eyepieces. Treat the 16" Dobsonian as all other contact surfaces and clean prior to use and after use.
4. Members must bring their own sanitizing equipment to clean all common surfaces they touch with their hands, such as doorknobs, keypads and locks, tables and counters, chair backs, light switches, toilet paper container, toilet seat and toilet crank. Hand sanitizers must contain at least 60% alcohol to be effective.
5. Clean and disinfect common high-touch surfaces after use with the bleach solution or disinfectant wipes.
6. Practice good hand hygiene, cough etiquette and staying home if you are sick. If you feel unwell after visiting SCO, go to 811.novascotia.ca and use the self-assessment questionnaire to find out if you need to call 811. Also notify them of others who were at the site who may have become exposed.
7. Garbage in, garbage out! Please provide your own garbage bag for used cloths and paper towels, used disinfectant materials, facial tissues, food wrappers, napkins, disposable beverage containers, etc.

After March 21 (Phase 3):

In accordance with provincial covid policy, restrictions on the SCO site are lifted after March 21st, 2022. However, the RASC Halifax Centre still encourages members to wear masks, to distance themselves when appropriate, and to get vaccinated against Covid-19 if they have not already done so.