

STARS RESOURCES

Solar observing safety

Teacher notes

IMPORTANT

Solar observing safety – Dobsonian

The most important messages are:

- Treat the solar filter like glass. Once it is damaged it must be destroyed and disposed of so that no-one can mistakenly use it. A damaged filter can damage your eyesight.
- Do not leave the telescope unattended.
- Only use a solar filter that is designed for YOUR telescope.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Remove the finderscope before use. Check that it has been removed BEFORE using the telescope or allowing anyone else to use the telescope.
2. Check the solar filter for holes before placing it on the telescope. Hold it up against the light to be sure. If there are any holes, punctures, or weaknesses of any size (even pinpricks) do not use the solar filter. Even the smallest hole can let in sunlight that can damage your eyesight.
3. Place the solar filter on the end of the Dobsonian and make sure the fit is firm.
4. Use duct tape to tape around the edge of the solar filter and secure it to the Dobsonian. This is to ensure the filter can't come off accidentally and also to make certain no light can seep in around the edge of the filter.
5. Stand near the filter end of the telescope when the students are using it:
 - a. Each and every time, make sure the solar filter is on, firmly fitted, and undamaged before anyone uses the telescope.
 - b. It is also a good idea to block the Sun from the viewers' eyes when they are looking into the eyepiece to aid their observing with an umbrella or similar.
6. Warn everyone not to hold onto the telescope when they are using it and be aware of everyone's hands when they go to use the telescope. Often children try to grab onto the end of the telescope and curl their fingers around the cap to steady themselves. This can damage the solar filter.
7. If anyone or anything has come in contact with the solar filter or the end of the telescope, stop using it immediately. Do not use it until it is confirmed that it is not damaged in any way.
8. DO NOT LEAVE THE TELESCOPE UNATTENDED AT ANY POINT.