



OVERVIEW

Monday, April 8, 2024, Jackson County, along with most of the state of Indiana, will experience a total solar eclipse. Due to the rarity, many people do not know about or what to expect during an eclipse.

A total eclipse is an infrequent event that occurs when the moon passes between the sun and the earth. This may cause a complete blockage of the sun. When the eclipse takes place, the sky will become dark, similar to dawn.

So, why is this eclipse raising a lot publicity and concern? The April 8 eclipse puts Jackson County in the path of 100% totality. Viewers will be able to see the sun's corona (outer atmosphere), which cannot be seen, ordinarily, due to brightness of the sun.

The total eclipse will begin at 3:04 in the afternoon and the total duration will last approximately 4 minutes and 2 seconds.

For reference: <https://youtube/qZRvspi6vLQ>

This event is creating a “stir” and some concern over the influx of visitors to expect not only during the eclipse, but for the days leading up to the eclipse. Historical guidance is that we should expect 3 times the population of our county, and communities, and we should prepare for what this may bring to our average day. Complications with travel and over-exhausted use of critical infrastructure such as communications (cell & internet service) and fuel are likely to occur during and after the event, as these have been challenges and issues that jurisdictions around the US have documented in After-Action Reports following the August 21, 2017 total solar eclipse. Heavy traffic congestion, long travel days, and fuel shortages were documented and could occur during this event.

Now is the time to start preparing and planning within your organization.

How could the complications and issues caused by the eclipse impact your business?

Local businesses can experience both positive and negative effects from a total solar eclipse. The increase in visitors coming to the area could increase sales and productivity for your business. The eclipse can, also, help with your business marketing, as several visitors may come from different states and other areas unfamiliar with Jackson County. As

these effects can be seen as positives for businesses, it's essential not to overlook the factors that could negatively impact or cause interruptions in the operations on the day, or days leading into, the event. If traffic is heavily congested and there are long travel delays, customers may not be able to get to your business. Keep in mind, that if the roads are backed up, you may have customers that may not be able to leave due to congestion which would or may lead to overcrowding or unusual requests for accommodations.

Cell towers and internet services could be overwhelmed because more people are on their phones and the internet during the day. This could cause interruptions if you rely on cell phones for communications within your business. Your business could, also, face complications if you depend on the internet. According to other jurisdictions that have experienced a total eclipse, these interruptions could occur on the day of the eclipse. Remember that significant increase in visitors could mean that theft and other criminal activities may increase.

The following are a few items to consider in planning up to the event:

Delivery delays could slow down receiving products and supplies needed for routine operation of your business due to demand and travel congestion by the eclipse event. Late deliveries could impact revenues, customer service and create significant stress.

Businesses could, also, face supply shortages due to the increase in visitors.

If your business has a shift change on or around the 3 o'clock hour, your employees may have issues getting to work or leaving on time due to travel issues. It is possible that travel delays could last several hours. In 2017, some jurisdictions within the path of totality expressed that school buses didn't finish drop-off until 8:00 in the evening.

Communications based on technology may be completely down and, with likelihood, be inconsistent. Employees may be unable to communicate their issues with delays, transportation issues, etc. Most Jackson County schools will be closed on April 8. This may create childcare issues.

The following are a few items to consider as a solution or option:

Think about scheduling deliveries before Monday, April 8 to ensure that your deliveries may be received on time. In turn, consider scheduling your deliveries on another date. Plan for an increase in demand for resources. Be prepared to address shortages and what that could look like for your business and employees.

Consider rescheduling customers, patients and patrons to another date. Utilize a skeleton crew for daily operations and implement a plan for work-from-home. Consider your schedule for the day and adjust accordingly. Shift transitions may be complicated. Consider accommodations for employees should the need arise. This includes food and water, sleeping accommodations, etc.