

Getting ready for night lab

If it is your turn in the night lab rotation (the rotation list is on the bulletin board in room 524) you have a few things you need to do before the lab starts.

1. Check the weather. First, look outside to see if it is cloudy. Next check the satellite images on www.weather.com for our zip code -02215. Within weather.com you will see a Doppler image of the area, click the image. This will take you to a larger version of the image with a menu below it that will let you select the satellite image for the region. Once you have selected the satellite images click the “show map in motion” link right below the picture. This will show the cloud movement over the last hour or two. This will help you determine what weather is headed into town.
2. Make the decision on whether or not to hold the night lab and make the announcement on the phone system before 5:30. Many times you will see clouds in the sky at dusk, however this does not mean it will be a cloudy night. It is important to check the satellite images, because many times the clouds you see at dusk quickly pass through and leave a clear night behind. If the weather looks chancy, just announce on the phone system that you will put off making the decision for 30 minutes, (or if the first night lab begins at 7:30 make the decision at 6:30). . Remember, if too many night labs are cancelled we will have to hold extra night labs so students have an opportunity to come to the lab.
3. Once the decision has been made, put up signs on the door leading to the observatory indicating whether or not the lab will be held.
4. If the weather is good you will need to start setting up at least 30 minutes before it is scheduled to begin.
5. On the chalk board in the observatory write down the date and time for that night lab and the weather conditions i.e. temperature, cloud conditions, visibility, and moon phase.
6. Set out the log notebook for the students to sign on the table in front of the chalk board. The log notebook is usually kept in the table. Turn to a clean page and write in the date, time, and who the TAs are.
7. Set up the telescopes to be used that night.
8. Put the large metal buckets over the flood lights pointing up at the tower.
9. Make sure the red lights in the observatory are on.
10. Leave the door to the observatory shut until you are ready to begin the lab, otherwise students show up, mill around, and get in the way while you are trying to set up.

Shutting down

1. Once you have gotten all of the students out of the observatory close the door so no late students show up and try to sign the sheet.
2. To prevent “additions” to the log sheet make sure to cross through all the empty slots left and write the number of students on the top of the sheet.
3. Shut down and put up the scopes.

4. Bring the buckets in off the flood lights.
5. Make sure nothing is left outside.
6. Turn off the lights. Check to make sure no dome lights are left on.
7. Close all the doors.
8. Go to room 524 and write the weather and the number of students attended the lab in the space under you names on the rotation list.
9. You're done.