

# Information before observing

## Telescope Time Applications

Limited resources mean that the VATT is not a visitor's telescope, but time is available for collaborations and suitable long term projects. 75% of time on VATT is allocated through the Vatican Observatory, and the remaining 25% is allocated through Steward Observatory. Applications should be made through the respective observatories.

## Alert from Brother Guy Consolmagno SJ, Director of the Vatican Observatory

All the telescope users associated with the University of Arizona are being asked to document the scientific results that come from their use, in order to give our funding agencies and donors a clear idea of the results that our telescopes are producing.

To that end, as an essential part of your getting time at the VATT, we ask that you:

- Let us know about any publication that uses data you have obtained on the VATT, by email to Brother Guy
- Be sure to acknowledge explicitly in every publication that uses data from the VATT, that your work is based on data acquired at the VATT or is otherwise connected to the VATT by including: **Based on observations with the VATT: the Alice P. Lennon Telescope and the Thomas J. Bannan Astrophysics Facility.**
- Use the facility keyword "VATT" in publications, as in AASTeX

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\facility{VATT}
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## Checkin and Checkout

There is no telescope operator at VATT. It is the observers' responsibility, prior to their run, to ensure that they have been trained in the operation of the telescope and in the use of the scheduled instrument. Arrangements for training and checkout can be made via VORG's Telescope Scientist, Richard Boyle.

Please follow this link to see currently checked out observers.

For the present, we are requiring two observers to be present at VATT. This is both for efficiency of observing and for telescope and personnel safety. Exceptions to this policy can be requested.

[VATT's operational instructions and other documentation is available in this Wiki. The 2005](#)

instructions are dated (2005), but some of the images can still be useful.

## VATT Observers Responsibilities Prior to an Observing Run

Principal Investigators will be responsible for:

- booking their observers' rooms at VATT with Gary Gray and
- filling in the registration form
- Please do this, at least 3 weeks before the run,
- Richard Boyle - Telescope Scientist - will appreciate being copied on these emails so he can facilitate these arrangements, if necessary
- making transport arrangements (usually commercial rental) to the mountain.
- Note that a 4WD vehicle with chains is usually needed in winter.
- returning a Medical Release form, if an accompanying student is under 18 years old, to the VATT Director, Paul Gabor [fax: 520-621-1532].
- All observers are recommended to read the helpful information in the [Mount Graham Orientation documentation](#).

## Travel to VATT on Mt. Graham

The [attached map](#) shows the location of the Mt. Graham site with respect to Tucson. (Other maps can be found in the [MGIO pages](#).)

For those arriving from out of state it is most convenient to fly to Tucson, but it can be cheaper to fly to Phoenix and either get the shuttle minibus (\$15 and 2 hours ride) down to Tucson or take a rental car direct to the MGIO Base Camp near Safford. You must plan on arriving at least the day before you are due to begin observing (or checkout training) at VATT since distance and altitude make the Mt. Graham International Observatory (MGIO) more difficult to access than Kitt Peak Observatory.

With no snow, it takes about 3.5 hours to drive from Tucson to the VATT (2 hours to the MGIO Base Camp; 1.5 hours more to the observatory). Since the VATT is at 10,500 feet, any precipitation between November to April will fall as snow, and in these months a four-wheel drive, high-clearance vehicle with chains (and patience) is usually required to access the site.

[Please review how to](#)

[drive in winter conditions safely](#)

. Regular observers should do this review at least once per winter season.

UofA observers' 4WD options include (March 2004):

- the UofA motor pool (621-5124)
- Excursions are ~\$65 per day, plus \$0.29 per mile. They are very good with roadside repairs and don't hold vehicle damage against you.
- Enterprise (on Grant, 881-9400)
- 4WDs are ~\$83 a day with some reasonable mileage limit (300-400 miles) and no per mileage charge. They take UofA accounts also.

Detailed instructions for getting to VATT can be supplied to observers, as will a US Forest Service permit to be present in the red squirrel refugium in which VATT is located.

Additional information about the Base Camp and its organization can be found at the [Mount Graham International Observatory website](#).

## Accommodation for VATT Observers

There are 4 guest rooms at VATT, and it is self-catering, but there is an efficient kitchen and an outdoor barbecue. There are no stores on the mountain, so all food and supplies must be brought up to the VATT by observers.

Water is an expensive commodity at MGIO, so observers are asked to be conservative in their use of it. Electricity is also expensive, but heat is plentiful.

Observing is done from a warm room, so the observatory does not supply cold weather outer clothes for observers. It can get down into single digits Fahrenheit during winter nights, but this is unusual with low temperatures generally in the low 20's F. Be prepared for snow lying on the ground during winter months since the average total snowfall is 10 feet. Maximum summer daytime temperatures are in the 70's F for this mountain climate.

The phone number is **520-626-6365**

Please note that there is no custodial service at weekends.

- If your departure occurs during a weekend, and if new observers are scheduled to arrive, then out of respect for them please leave the facility neat.
- If your departure occurs during the week, please understand that the custodial staff will be preparing for the new arrivals by about 1 p.m.

## Observers Health

If you are not used to the altitude of VATT, you'll have to watch your exertions for the first day or so. There is an elevator, and oxygen is available in emergencies.

It can be very dry in the building, so bring skin lotions if you are likely to need these.

From:  
<https://lavinia.as.arizona.edu/~tscopewiki/> - **MOON**

Permanent link:  
<https://lavinia.as.arizona.edu/~tscopewiki/doku.php?id=vatt:for-applicants&rev=1617253635>

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