

Peninsula Astronomical Society
Oak Ridge Observatory

PAS 12" Observatory Rules and Requirements
Meade 12" LX200 GPS Telescope
June 3, 2005

1. Observatory Ownership

This telescope and all accessories, including eyepieces and dome, are the property of the *Peninsula Astronomical Society (PAS)*. PAS Members will be granted permission to use this telescope as the Officers of the Society determine to be appropriate; such permission may be revoked at any time.

2. Observatory Access

The telescope may only be used by members in good standing of the *PAS*. A valid *Oak Ridge Disclaimer* form must be on file with the Membership Chairperson in order to use this site. The member must be checked out in the proper operation of the telescope by the current PAS Oak Ridge 12" Telescope Chairperson.

The member's current home address and home or mobile telephone number must be provided to the Membership Chairperson; a PO Box is not acceptable. All users of this telescope are required to join and maintain an ID on the 'Peninsula Astronomical Society Oak Ridge Observatory 12" Telescope Users Group' email list on Yahoo Groups. The combination lock will be changed frequently and the new combination will only be distributed via the email list.

Do NOT allow others to observe the combination when you enter it on the padlock. Store the padlock inside the dome where it cannot be seen by anyone else.

Do NOT open the dome shutter if the skies are not clear or if it is very windy. Remember that it takes some time to close the shutter. If you see clouds heading your way, shut down the telescope and close the shutter before it's too late!

You may allow other PAS members and your guests into the dome and allow them to view through the eyepiece. Do not allow anyone who is not duly checked out and authorized to use this telescope to operate it at any time.

If more than one PAS Member who is checked out on this telescope wishes to use it at the same time, the members will need to share the telescope. Exclusive use for special observing projects must be arranged in advance with the Oak Ridge Chair and/or the PAS Board of Directors.

Please remember that we have neighbors! Make every effort to keep the noise level down – avoid loud talking, music, etc. at all times.

3. Dome Operation

The dome and shutter are operated manually. Please treat them gently – we'd like them to last a long time! It takes some effort to operate the crank that opens the dome shutter until it gets past the half way point. It helps to crank the shutter part way open, then take a break – a good time to fill out the log book and perhaps move the rest of your things from your car.

The dome is rotated by pulling on the wooden handle at the end of the chain. Please move the dome slowly to minimize the amount of noise it makes, especially in the early morning hours.

4. Telescope Operation

Electrical power is provided by means of an extension cord which you should find inside the dome. Connect the cord to the plug just outside the building first, run it over to the outlets at the end of the terraces, then plug it in.

The telescope must ALWAYS be moved using the control paddle (with very few exceptions). Please follow the procedures given for startup and shutdown in the *PAS Oak Ridge 12" Checklist* document.

This is a fully automated "GoTo" telescope. If you have never used one before, or never used the Meade AutoStar II version, please allow yourself some time to become familiar with the scope's operation. A copy of the Meade manual is in the desk, and also available online on the Meade web site. Please take the time to read this document, in particular the sections on the menus and finding objects. Please DO NOT attempt ANY of the calibration operations – the scope has been fully aligned, including over 2 hours of drift method polar alignment, and you are not authorized to perform any of the calibration operations. You are welcome to use your PC to control the telescope. *Use of Meade software to update the telescope software or its database is prohibited! Updates may only be done by the Oak Ridge 12" Chairperson or a person authorized by the Chairperson.*

The Meade AutoStar system is not perfect. For fixed objects it will generally do a very good job of putting the object in the eyepiece, especially at low power. It is not a very sophisticated computer, however, and its ability to solve orbital equations is limited, so it will not do as well with faster moving objects such as planets, comets, or asteroids. If you want to really enjoy the power of this telescope, bring your laptop with a program such as Starry Night or Guide installed, and connect it to the rs232 connector provided at the desk. You will find yourself observing 8-10 objects an hour, and nearly all of your time will be spent observing rather than searching.

The AutoStar system can fail – if the scope starts moving in odd directions or otherwise acting weirdly, the best recourse is to "reboot" it. Follow the Shutdown procedure to Park the scope first, then turn it off, wait a minute, and then follow the Startup procedure again to re-initialize the scope.

5. Closing Down

When you have finished observing for the night, please PARK the telescope using the procedure given in the *Checklist* document. Close the dome shutter completely and rotate the dome so that the shutter is to the North. Remove any personal items and any trash. Do NOT leave any food, food wrappers, beverage containers, etc. anywhere in the observatory, not even in the trash can – they will attract ants! Unplug the extension cord from the outlet, then from the building, coil it NEATLY, and place inside the dome. Be sure to lock the door with the combination lock when you leave. Do NOT lock the door knob, or you won't be able to get back in!

6. Log Book

You are REQUIRED to fill out the log book any time you use this telescope. Please do so as soon as you open the observatory, entering your name, the date and time, and the names of any other PAS members or guests that are with you. You are encouraged to record your observations as well but this is not mandatory.

7. Problems and Repairs

Report all problems with the telescope or dome, or any missing items, to the Oak Ridge Chairperson(s) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, by telephone or email – email to the Oak Ridge 12” Yahoo Group is probably the best way to do this.

Do NOT attempt to make any repairs or modifications of any kind to the telescope! Do NOT attempt to clean the optics or eyepieces! If maintenance is required, it will be performed by the PAS Oak Ridge 12” Chairperson or someone designated to do so by the PAS Board, with permission obtained IN ADVANCE.

If there is a problem with the dome shutter or door that would threaten the security of the telescope or expose it to the elements, please make every effort to secure the building and protect the equipment, and notify the Oak Ridge 12” Chairperson and/or a PAS Officer (President, Vice President, Secretary) as soon as possible.

8. Safety Precautions

Do not make any changes to the telescope or dome wiring. Be careful when moving around inside the dome in the dark, it is easy to hit your head on the shutter crank or pull handle. Keep at least a low level of lighting on at all times. Do not observe alone unless someone knows where you are. Most cell phones work at this location – if you have a cell phone bring it with you and make sure the battery is charged. There is a fire extinguisher inside the dome, just inside the door on the right. Anyone found using the telescope while their judgment is impaired due to alcohol or drugs will have their access revoked.

9. User Agreement (your copy)

The undersigned member of the Peninsula Astronomical Society, having been duly checked out in the operation of this telescope by an Officer of the Society, hereby acknowledges that they have received a copy of this document, and that they agree to comply with the *Rules And Requirements* as set forth herein. The undersigned further acknowledges that failure to comply will result in the immediate suspension of the member's access to this telescope, and may also result in revocation of the member's access to the Oak Ridge site.

I have read, understand, and agree to follow the **PAS 12" Observatory Rules and Requirements** dated June 3, 2005.

I understand that the most critical rules of operation are those affecting the safety of people in the observatory and the safety of the observing equipment and facility.

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Name: (Print): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____

Work Phone: (____) _____

Social Security Number or California Driver's License: _____

Email (Print): _____

Checked out by:

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Name: (Print): _____

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Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Name: (Print): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____

Work Phone: (____) _____

Social Security Number or California Driver's License: _____

Email (Print): _____

Checked out by:

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Name: (Print): _____