

## Availability and Scheduling of NEWFIRM through 2011

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NEWFIRM will enable improved wide-field near-IR imaging at both the Mayall 4-m and Blanco 4-m telescopes. We anticipate significant over-subscription in requests to use this powerful new instrument (<http://www.noao.edu/ets/newfirm/>). It is important that those proposing for survey or standard programs using NEWFIRM are aware of the availability and scheduling plans for NEWFIRM and its filters over the next few years. Please use the information below to inform the development of your observing proposals.

**Location:** It is anticipated that NEWFIRM will move between KPNO and CTIO in an effort to maximize its scientific impact. NEWFIRM will be available for observations on the KPNO Mayall 4-m telescope during semester 2008A through the end of 2009B. Near the end of 2009B and/or start of 2010A, NEWFIRM will be moved to CTIO. This provides four full semesters for KPNO specific programs to be completed before the first of NEWFIRM's moves between the two 4-m telescopes. The instrument will become available on the Blanco telescope sometime during the 2010A semester and will remain at CTIO at least through the end of the 2011B semester. We reserve the right to change the dates of the moves of NEWFIRM between the sites if circumstances change.

**The Survey Cap:** Survey programs are nominally limited to no more than 20% of any available NOAO resource. Included among these resources is the amount of dark (or bright) time that might go to surveys. The intent of the cap is to avoid severely limiting the availability of any particular resource (dark time, instrument, month) to proposals submitted through the normal proposal process (twice a year). NEWFIRM, with its moves between hemispheres, presents severe scheduling challenges as a result of this policy. We will construct our telescope schedules to ensure that programs that are scheduled for the Mayall over the next two years and that cannot be completed when the instrument is at the Blanco are completed before the move for the 2010A semester. This requirement, together with anticipated high over-subscription, will make it difficult for very many survey programs with NEWFIRM to be selected. Highly ranked NEWFIRM survey proposals that we cannot allocate under the survey program will automatically be considered by the regular TAC, perhaps in reduced or modified form, for time allocation as regular programs.

**NEWFIRM Filters:** NEWFIRM has two filter wheels, each with 7 slots for filters. Some of the filters must be used with a blocking filter (i.e. two "slots" must be used). It takes a minimum of four weeks to change filters (instrument warm-up, change filters, cool-down). The availability of specific proprietary filters or of empty slots in the filter wheel in any given semester will depend on decisions that can only be made after the TAC meets and has provided its ranked list of programs. Please see the NEWFIRM web pages for a list of available filters and restrictions on their use.