

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

COMET AND NOVA SECTION

DISCOVERY OF A COMET OR NOVA:

If you note an unusual object in the sky, try following this procedure:

1. Make a drawing of the immediate region of the object, marking several known objects. Note the date, time, and time zone.
2. With the aid of a star atlas, estimate the Right Ascension and Declination of the object.
3. Estimate the brightness (magnitude) by comparing with stars of known magnitudes.
4. Contact another observer immediately and have him confirm your discovery.
5. Check the object again an hour or two later to determine if there is any motion.
6. Send a telegram to the Harvard College Observatory giving date, time, position, brightness, and motion (if any). Then notify the National Co-ordinator of the Comet and Nova Section by special delivery letter.

The following is an example of a discovery telegram for a hypothetical object:

HARVARD COLLEGE OBSERVATORY
CAMBRIDGE MASS

NEW OBJECT JANUARY 1 1015 UT. RA 16H 25M DEC PLUS 40 DEG 30 MIN.
MAG 7. MOTION NW 2 MIN ARC PER HOUR

JOHN DOE FIRST AVE CITY