

# GUIDELINES FOR GOOD EXTERIOR LIGHTING PLANS

Prepared by: The Dark Sky Society (<http://www.darksksociety.org/>) 2009

These guidelines have been developed in consultation with lighting professionals (with experience in developing good lighting plans) to aid communities wishing to control light pollution and preserve the night sky.

**Outdoor lighting should be carefully designed with regard to placement, intensity, timing, duration, and color. Good lighting will:**

- **Promote Safety**

“More light” is not necessarily” better”. If not designed and installed correctly, unsafe glare can result, reducing the effect of lighting which can contribute to accidents and hinder visibility. Lighting that is too bright interferes with the eye's ability to adapt to darker areas.

- **Save Money**

Adhering to professionally recommended light levels provides adequate illumination. Shielded fixtures with efficient light bulbs are more cost-effective because they use less energy by directing the light toward the ground. See this website for cost comparisons:  
<http://www.netacc.net/~poulsen/lightcost.html>

- **Conserve Natural Resources**

Inappropriate or excessive lighting wastes our limited natural resources and pollutes the air and water by unnecessarily burning our limited supply of fossil fuels.

- **Be Better Neighbors**

Excessive or misdirected lighting can intrude on the privacy of others when light or glare trespasses over property lines.

- **Retain Community's Character and Reduce Skyglow**

Our clear view of the dark starry night sky is a resource to be preserved and protected. Stray and excessive lighting contributes to "light pollution", clutter, and unnatural "sky glow".

- **Protect Ecology of Flora and Fauna**

Research studies indicate that artificial night lighting disrupts the migrating, feeding, and breeding habits of many wildlife species, as well as growth patterns of trees. See references in [The Ecological Consequences of Artificial Night Lighting](#).

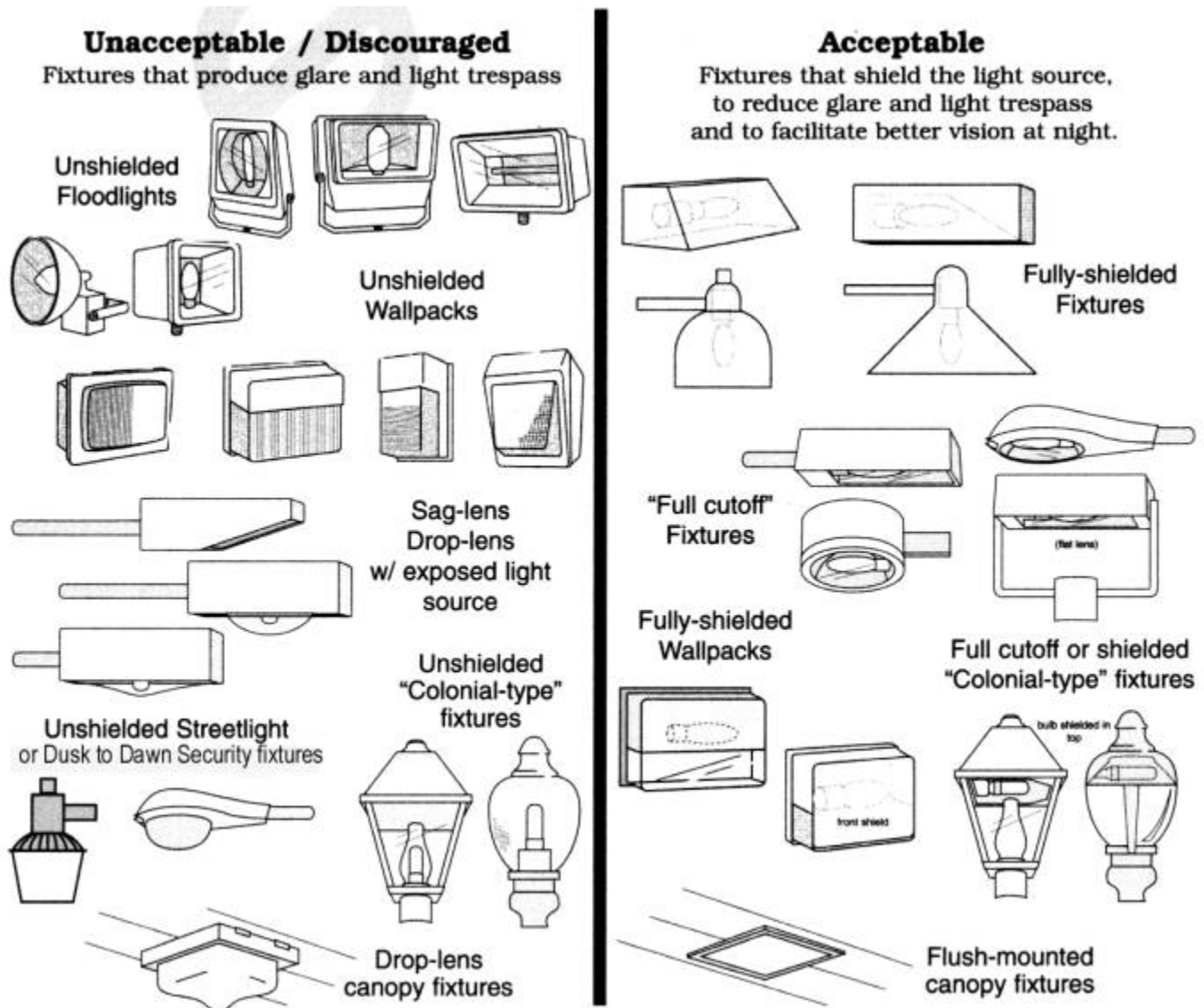
- **Reduce Health Risks**

Light at night not only disrupts your sleep but also interferes with your circadian rhythms. Recent research indicates that intrusive lighting may reduce the production of melatonin, a beneficial hormone, and a resulting raise in the rates of breast and other cancers.

- Included:**
1. **Diagrams of Acceptable/Unacceptable Lighting Fixtures**
  2. **How to Develop an Acceptable Lighting Plan**
  3. **Definitions of Full Cut Off, Shielded, and RLM sign lighting Fixtures**
  4. **Lighting Plan Submissions**
  5. **Recommended Illumination Levels for various tasks**

## UNSHIELDED FIXTURES

## Full Cutoff and Fully Shielded Fixtures



Diagrams courtesy of Bob Crelin

\*\*\*\*\* Ask your local electrical suppliers for "full-cut off" or "fully shielded" light fixtures. Once you have selected fixtures which are compatible with your architecture and community, contact the manufacturer's representative to see a sample of the fixture(s) and to ask for a free lighting plan. If you have a CAD file, the plan can be easily provided in a short period of time. \*\*\*\*\*

Most lighting manufacturers have Application Departments which will execute free lighting plans to meet local lighting codes.

See this website for links to manufacturers:

<http://www.darksky.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=56422&orgId=idsa>

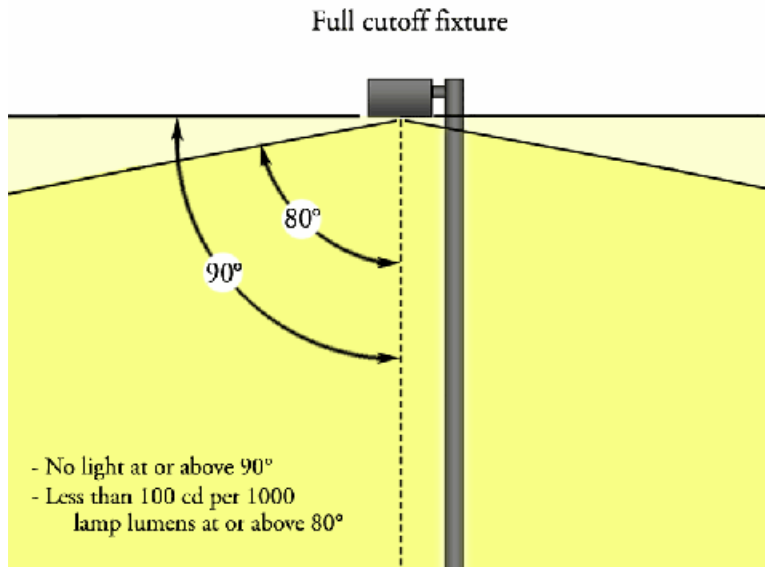
Sample of Web retailers:

[www.starrynightlights.com](http://www.starrynightlights.com) and [www.greeneearthlighting.com](http://www.greeneearthlighting.com)

## How to Develop an Acceptable Lighting Plan

1. Identify where as well as when lighting is needed. Confine and minimize lighting to the extent necessary to meet safety purposes. Plans should define the areas for which illumination is planned. Itemizing each area (e.g. parking lot, doorways, walkways, signage, foliage) with the anticipated hours of use. Commercial outdoor lighting should be used for safe pedestrian passage and property identification, and lit during active business hours and shut off afterward.
2. Direct light downward by choosing the correct type of light fixtures. (See Appendix 3). Specify IES (Illuminating Engineering Society) "Full Cut Off" designated or "fully shielded" fixtures, so that no light is emitted above the lowest light emitting part of the fixture. Top mounted sign lighting is recommended with "RLM" (dish) type shields, and aimed so that the light falls entirely on the sign and is positioned so that the light source (bulb) is not visible from any point off the property or into the roadway to reduce glare. For each one square foot of sign, usually no more than 200 lumens is necessary for good visibility.
3. Select the correct light source (bulb type). Compact fluorescent (2300K) or High Pressure Sodium is recommended unless the light is motion sensor activated, in which case incandescent or the instant start compact fluorescent bulbs can be used. Metal Halide (due to its higher costs, energy use, impact on the environment, and greater contribution to "sky glow") is discouraged, as well as light sources rated over 3000 Kelvin; and outdated Mercury Vapor bulbs are prohibited.
4. Utilize "shut off" controls such as sensors, timers, motion detectors, etc. Automatic controls turn off lights when not needed. All lights should be extinguished no later than one half hour after the close of business. Additional motion sensor activated lighting can be used for emergency access. Avoid "dusk-to-dawn" sensors without a middle of the night shut off control. Lights alone will not serve to "protect" property and are a poor "security" device. Examine other means of protecting property and to discourage criminal activity. Let your local police know that you have a "lights out" policy so that they can investigate if they see lights or activity after hours.
5. Limit the height of fixtures. Locate fixtures no closer to the property line than four times the mounting height of the fixture, and not to exceed the height of adjacent structures. (Exceptions may be made for larger parking areas, commercial zones adjacent to highways, or for fixtures with greater cut off shielding behind the pole mount in commercial zones.)
6. Limit light crossing property lines, i.e. "light trespass". Limit light to spill across the property lines. Light levels at the property line should not exceed 0.1 footcandles (fc) adjacent to business properties, and 0.05 fc at residential property boundaries. Utility leased floodlight fixtures mounted on public utility poles in the public right-of-way should not be used.
7. Use the correct amount of light. Light levels and uniformity ratios should not exceed recommended values, per IESNA RP-33 or 20. (See Appendix 5, Recommended Illumination Levels for various tasks.) "Lumen cap" recommendations for areas to be illuminated are as follows: commercial properties in non-urban commercial zones = 25,000 lumens per acre; for projects in residential and LBO zones = 10,000 lumens per acre. For residential properties: for suburban: 50,000 lumens per acre cap, and in urban areas: 100,000.
8. Ask for Assistance Your Planning Department and local lighting sales representatives can assist you in obtaining the necessary information for good lighting. For large projects over 15,000 lumens: greater energy conservation and control of light pollution, light trespass and glare, may be achieved with the help of a professional lighting designer with "dark sky" lighting plan experience.
9. A post installation inspection should be conducted to check for compliance. Substitutions by electricians and contractors are common and should not be accepted. Final Approved Site Plans will not allow additional exterior fixtures or substitutes without reviews.
10. Design interior lighting so that it does not illuminate the outdoors. Provide interior lighting photometrics for the building's perimeter areas, demonstrating that the interior lighting falls substantially within the building and not through the windows. After closing, interior lighting that extends outdoors needs to be extinguished by the use of shut off timers.

## Definition of Acceptable Fixtures: "Full Cut Off", "Fully Shielded", and RLM shield.



- "Full Cut Off" fixtures are independently certified by the manufacturers, and do not allow light to be emitted above the fixture and the fixture reduces glare by limiting the light output to less than 10% at and below 10 degrees below the horizontal.
- If the manufacturer is unable to provide the "cut off" characteristics for a fixture (also called a "luminaire"), the following definition needs to be met, which can usually be determined by a visual inspection:

"Fully Shielded": a fixture constructed and installed in such a manner that all light emitted by it, either directly from the lamp (bulb) or a diffusing element, or indirectly by reflection or refraction from any part of the fixture, is projected below the horizontal. This can be determined by a "field test" or a visual assessment of an operating sample.

- Manufacturers and their representatives can provide photographs of light fixtures as "cut sheets" as well as literature confirming the independently tested "cut off" characteristics of their products. These IES files may be assessed for compliance in a computer program: <http://www.3dop.com/index1.html>
- Photometric layouts for different heights, light sources, and wattages, are also available as "IES" files, upon request or through manufacturers' websites.
- Fixtures must be installed properly, so that the bottom of the fixture is level with the ground. Exceptions are often given for sign lighting which requires vertical lighting:



"RLM" sign lighting shield:

# Lighting Plan Submissions

The following information needs to be provided to your municipality's review board which will enable them to evaluate the Site Plan for proper exterior lighting:

The Lighting Plan should be depicted on a site plan, indicating the location of each current and proposed outdoor lighting fixture with projected hours of use. This plan will need to be stamped and certified by a licensed professional, such as an architect or engineer. Many lighting manufacturers can provide free photometric layouts on prepared site plans, to conform to your local requirements.

- (1) The lighting plan should include a KEY to the proposed lighting that provides the following information:
  - Type and number of luminaire equipment (fixtures), including the "cut off characteristics", indicating manufacturer and model number(s).
  - Lamp source type (bulb type, i.e. high pressure sodium), lumen output, and wattage.
  - Mounting height with distance noted to the nearest property line for each luminaire.
  - Types of timing devices used to control the hours set for illumination, as well as the proposed hours when each fixture will be operated.
  - Total Lumens for each fixture, and total square footage of areas to be illuminated. For projects that are in commercial zones, the lumens per net acre to be lit, need not exceed 25,000 lumens. For projects in residential or LBO zones: 10,000 lumens.
  - For all plans of more than three fixtures: A Calculation Summary indicating footcandle levels on the lighting plan, noting the maximum, average and minimum, as well as the uniformity ratio of maximum to minimum, and average to minimum levels\*.
- (2) Lighting manufacturer-supplied specifications ("cut sheets") that include photographs of the fixtures, indicating the certified "cut off characteristics" of the fixture.
- (3) Footcandle Distribution, plotting the light levels in footcandles on the ground, at the designated mounting heights for the proposed fixtures. Maximum illuminance levels should be expressed in footcandle measurements on a grid of the site showing footcandle readings in every five or ten-foot square. The grid shall include light contributions from all sources (i.e. pole mounted, wall mounted, sign, and street lights.) Show footcandle renderings five feet beyond the property lines.\*
- (4) If requested by the reviewing agency, a statement from a lighting professional that a plan, other than that set forth, is needed to meet the intent of these standards.
- (5) An environmental impact statement may be required as to the impact of the exterior lighting proposed on flora, fauna, and the night sky. Location of species sensitive to light at night or the proximity to nature preserves or astronomical observatories or "Dark Sky Parks", needs to be indicated.
- (6) On the Approved Plan it should be noted that no substitutions, additions, or changes may be made without prior approval by the governing authority.

\* This information can be obtained from the manufacturer, your lighting supplier, or the manufacturer's representative.

# Recommended Illumination Levels for various tasks\*

## I. Table of Limits of Illumination, measured in footcandles (fc) at ground level unless noted:

<u>Task Area</u>	<u>Avg.</u>	<u>Not to exceed:</u>
1. Active Building Entrance Approach	2.0 fc 0.2 fc	5 fc
2. Gas Station Approach		2 fc
3. Gas Station Pump Area		avg: 5 fc
4. Gas Station Service Area		avg: 3 fc
5. Sidewalks	0.2 fc	5 fc
6. Surface of signs		2 fc

## II. Average/Minimum/Uniformity Ratio Limits for Parking Lots:

### I. Public Parking Lots -- not to exceed:

<u>Average</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Uniformity Ratio (Max to Min/Avg to Min)</u>
0.8	0.2	20:1 / 4:1

### II. Private Parking Lots -- not to exceed:

<u>Average</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Uniformity Ratio (Max to Min / Avg to Min)</u>
0.5	0.13	20:1 / 4:1

OR:

III. If illuminance grid lighting plans cannot be reviewed or if fixtures do not provide photometrics and bulbs are under 2000 lumens, use these guidelines:

1. Pole shall be no greater in height than four times the distance to the property line.
2. Maximum Lumen Levels for different fixture heights:

<u>Mounting Height (Feet)</u>	<u>Recommended Lumen Maximums</u>
6	500 - 1000 lumens
8	600 - 1,600 lumens
10	1,000 - 2,000 lumens
12	1,600 - 2,400 lumens

**FOOTCANDLE:** ("FC") – Is the basic unit of illuminance (the amount of light falling on a surface). Footcandle measurement is taken with a hand held light meter. One footcandle is equivalent to the illuminance produced on one square foot of surface area by a source of one candle at a distance of one foot. Horizontal footcandles measure the illumination striking a horizontal plane. Footcandle values can be measured directly with certain handheld incident light meters.

**LUMEN** – A unit used to measure the actual amount of light that is produced by a bulb. The lumen quantifies the amount of light energy produced by a lamp at the lamp, not by the energy input, which is indicated by the "wattage". For example, a 75-watt incandescent lamp can produce 1000 lumens while a 70-watt high-pressure sodium lamp produces 6000 lumens. Lumen output is listed by the manufacturer on the packaging.

\* IES, Recommended Practices, (RP-33-99): Lighting for Exterior Environments; and (RP-20): Parking Lots. The Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IES or IESNA), is an organization that establishes updated standards and illumination guidelines for the lighting industry.  
<http://www.iesna.org/shop/item-detail.cfm?ID=RP-33-99&storeid=1>  
<http://www.iesna.org/shop/item-detail.cfm?ID=RP-20-98&storeid=1>