

Managing Outdoor Lighting

July 6, 2024

As more houses are being built in Centennial the problem of light pollution has increased. Most people would like to enjoy the night sky and have unobstructed view of the Milky Way, planets, and stars.

Our CC&Rs state that “Any light used to illuminate signs, parking areas or for any other purposes shall be so arranged as to reflect the light away from, and not be obtrusive to, other lots and away from the vision of passing motorists.” The Management Committee (Board of Directors) is charged with developmental approval and architectural control which includes lighting.

We suggest that owners take the following into consideration for “neighbor friendly” outdoor lighting.

Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting

If light is deemed useful and necessary, follow these guidelines to prevent, or when that’s not possible, minimize light pollution:

USEFUL – All light should have a clear purpose.

Before installing or replacing a light, determine if light is needed and, if so, what type. For example, if there are four lights under an eave, could you get by with two? Consider how the use of light will impact the area, including wildlife and the environment. Consider using reflective paints or self-luminous markers for signs and steps to reduce the need for permanently installed outdoor lighting.

TARGETED – Light should be directed only to where needed.

Use shielding and careful aiming to target the direction of the light beam so that it points downward and does not spill beyond where it is needed.

LOW LIGHT LEVELS – Light should be no brighter than necessary. Use the lowest light level required. Be mindful of surface conditions as some surfaces may reflect more light into the night sky than intended.

CONTROLLED – Light should be used only when it is useful. Use controls such as timers or motion detectors to ensure that light is available when it is needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed. This is particularly important for renters who are not likely to know the controls well and/or appreciate the magnitude of the problem.

COLOR – Use warmer color lights where possible. Warm lighting (longer wavelength) emits a color nearer to natural (reddish) lighting. Limit the amount of cool lighting (looks artificial blue-violet) to the least amount needed.

In summary: Light where you need it, when you need it, in the amount needed, and no more.

Sincerely,
The Board

Links

<https://www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/public-policy/homeowners-associations/>

<https://www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/lighting-principles/>