



Dark Sky Compliant Lighting

This Fact Sheet is not a substitute for the ordinance; it addresses common questions and provides basic information about the recently adopted dark sky compliant ordinance. For further information, please call the Planning Department.

All permits, fees, and factsheets can be found at cityofypsilanti.com/permits.

Completed applications may be dropped off, in person, at the Building Department, or submitted online at bsaonline.com/Ypsilanti.

City Hall

One South Huron
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Building

3rd Floor, City Hall
Phone: (734) 482-1025
cityofypsilanti.com/building

Planning

3rd Floor, City Hall
Phone: (734) 483-9646
cityofypsilanti.com/planning

Historic District

3rd Floor, City Hall
Phone: (734) 483-9646
cityofypsilanti.com/hdc

What is Dark Sky Compliance?

Dark sky compliant lighting refers to outdoor lighting designed to minimize light pollution by directing light downward where it's needed, rather than allowing it to spill into the sky or neighboring properties. Dark sky compliant fixtures are fully shielded, energy-efficient, and use appropriate color temperatures to reduce glare and skyglow.

Please check out [DarkSky International's Webpage](#).

Why is Dark Sky Compliant Lighting Important?

Protection of Human Health and Wellbeing: Exposure to artificial lights at night negatively affects human health, increasing the risk for sleep disorders, depression, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Nighttime exposure can suppress melatonin. Melatonin has antioxidant properties, induces sleep, boosts the immune system, lowers cholesterol, and helps the functioning of the thyroid, pancreas, adrenal glands, etc.

Preservation of the Natural Night Environment: Artificial lights alter the nighttime environment for nocturnal organisms. Plants and animals depend on Earth's daily cycle of light and dark to govern life-sustaining behaviors such as reproduction, nourishment, sleep, and protection from predators.

Enhancement of Community Character: Thoughtful lighting highlights character-defining features and protects the historic ambiance of our community.

Economic and Energy Efficiency: The direction of lighting where it is needed reduces wasted energy, which results in lower energy bills and longer-lasting fixtures.

Preservation of Night Sky Heritage: Our ancestors once gazed upon a sky filled with countless stars; a nightscape that inspired science, religion, philosophy, art, and literature. Today, that natural night sky is rapidly fading from view for newer generations. Experiencing the stars offers perspective and wonder, reminding us of our humanity and our place in the universe. The history of discovery, and even the essence of human curiosity itself, owes a profound debt to the brilliance of the natural night sky.

Applicability of the Dark Sky Compliance Ordinance

This ordinance applies to all outdoor lighting, and to any indoor lighting intended to be visible from outside, that is installed or replaced after the effective date of this ordinance. The following types of lighting are exempt from these provisions: lighting required by another legal authority, temporary lighting approved by the



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city for events and festivals, seasonal or ornamental lighting, and light fixtures designated as historic by the Historic District Commission.

Existing outdoor lighting that was legally installed before this ordinance took effect, but does not meet its standards, is considered legal and repairable but nonconforming. These fixtures may remain in use until one of the following occurs: the City determines the lighting causes glare, light trespass, or safety issues; the property undergoes a new or substantially changed commercial or multi-unit residential use that requires site plan review; or the fixture is replaced.

Light Fixture Specifications of the Dark Sky Compliance Ordinance

General Requirements:

- Color temperature: Fixtures may not exceed 3000 Kelvin.
- Fixture type: All lights, unless exempted, must be fully shielded, fully cutoff, and directed downward.
- Light spillover: Lighting may not exceed 0.5 footcandles at the property line. For buildings located on or built to the lot line, lighting may not exceed 8 footcandles at that line.
- Illumination levels: Areas requiring outdoor lighting must provide at least 0.3 footcandles but not more than 15 footcandles at ground level.
- Glare control: All lighting must be designed to prevent glare on nearby properties or streets.
- Motion-activated lights: Permitted if kept in good working order and not triggered by movement beyond the property line.

Freestanding Pole Lights: Freestanding light poles may not exceed 20 feet in height or the height of the principal building on the site, whichever is less.

Wall-Mounted Lights: Wall-mounted fixtures must be aimed no higher than 45 degrees below horizontal.

Ornamental Uplighting: Uplighting for architectural or landscape features may be allowed with City Planner or Planning Commission approval. Each fixture may not exceed 400 lumens or have a color temperature of 3000K.

Prohibited Lighting:

- Flashing, blinking, or oscillating lights are prohibited.
- The outlining of windows with LED strips, neon, or similar lighting visible from the public right-of-way is prohibited if it causes glare, light trespass, or visual clutter inconsistent with neighborhood character. Seasonal lighting is exempt.

Resources: Please check out [DarkSky International's Webpage](#). This page provides more examples of dark-sky compliant light fixtures.



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Good Lights for Good Nights

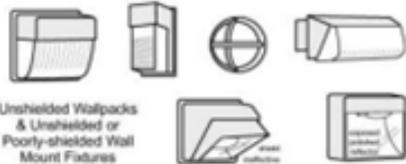
Help eliminate light pollution. Select the best fixture for your application using this guide. Use the lowest wattage bulb appropriate for the task and turn off the light when it's not being used.

Unacceptable / Discouraged

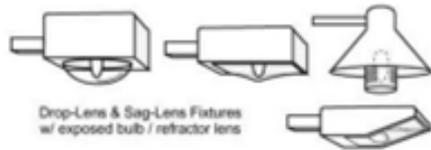
Fixtures that produce glare and light trespass



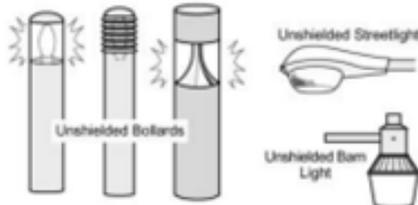
Unshielded Floodlights or Poorly-shielded Floodlights



Unshielded Wallpacks & Unshielded or Poorly-shielded Wall Mount Fixtures



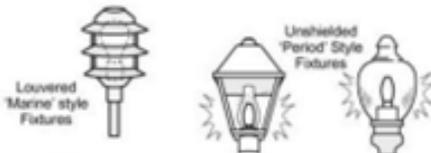
Drop-Lens & Sag-Lens Fixtures w/ exposed bulb / refractor lens



Unshielded Bollards

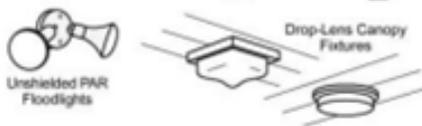
Unshielded Streetlight

Unshielded Barn Light



Louvered 'Marine' style Fixtures

Unshielded 'Period' Style Fixtures

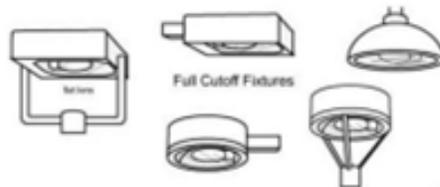


Unshielded PAR Floodlights

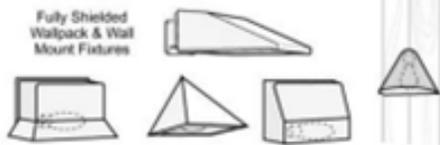
Drop-Lens Canopy Fixtures

Acceptable

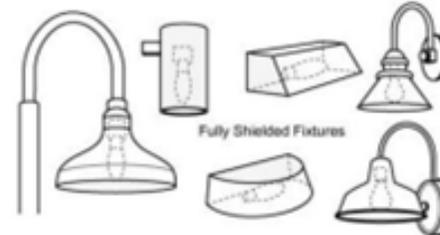
Fixtures that shield the light source to minimize glare and light trespass and to facilitate better vision at night



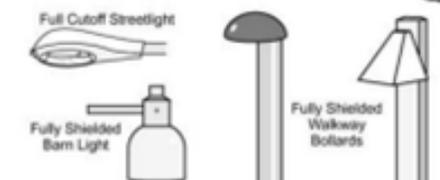
Full Cutoff Fixtures



Fully Shielded Wallpack & Wall Mount Fixtures



Fully Shielded Fixtures



Full Cutoff Streetlight

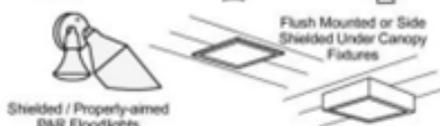
Fully Shielded Barn Light

Fully Shielded Walkway Bollards



Fully Shielded Decorative Fixtures

Fully Shielded 'Period' Style Fixtures



Shielded / Properly-aimed PAR Floodlights

Flush Mounted or Side Shielded Under Canopy Fixtures

Rendered for the Town of East Hampton, NY by Bob Crelin ©2016

presented by the

Dark Sky Society

www.darksksociety.org

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