



## Electrical Site Lighting - Information Sheet

### **What, if any, exterior wall or pole light shielding requirements exist?**

There is not a specific answer to this question as it depends on a number of variables. However, the Zoning Ordinance does specifically regulate site lighting for parking areas and parking lots, and in Section 30-710.12(5) states:

**Lighting.** Parking areas and parking lots shall be provided with lighting during the non-daylight hours when such are in use. Lighting shall be designed and installed so as to concentrate illumination within the parking area or parking lot and to prevent glare on adjoining properties and streets. The height of lighting structures shall not exceed the height limit of the district in which they are located, and in no case shall such height exceed 35 feet. When lighting is required by this subsection, the intensity of illumination within the area devoted to parking shall be not less than 0.5 horizontal footcandle at any location, provided that in no case shall the intensity of illumination exceed 0.5 horizontal footcandle at any property line abutting a lot in an R or RO district. The lighting maximum-to-minimum ratio within the parking area or parking lot shall not exceed 15:1. Parking area and parking lot lighting fixtures shall be constructed or shielded in such a manner that all light emitted by the fixture, either directly from the lamp or indirectly from the fixture, is projected below the horizontal plane of the fixture.

Lighting requires a minimum of .5-footcandle intensity within the parking area or lot, but cannot exceed .5-footcandle at a lot line abutting residentially-zoned property. A photometric study will more accurately dictate these variables and, thus, photometric plans are only required for site lighting of parking areas and lots. Obviously, different pole heights, lighting type and style and shielding methods will impact these figures.

Within *City Old & Historic Districts*, exterior lighting installations of any kind require specific design review approval of the Commission of Architectural Review (CAR). In addition, some properties have specific lighting plan conditions placed upon them by Community Unit Plan (CUP), Special Use Permit (SUP), Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) or Plan of Development (POD) approvals. These approvals may further regulate site lighting.

### **Height restrictions**

The Ordinance restricts all light structures to not more than thirty-five feet (35') in height, but several districts restrict them to lesser heights. The UB zoning district restricts light structures to twenty-eight feet (28') with the R-MH, RO-1 and B-1 districts restricting them to twenty-five feet (25') in height.

### **Lighting-type (manufacturers & style) requirements**

The type of lighting will be dictated by the requirement to meet the illumination intensity requirements, whether it is located with a *City Old & Historic District* requiring Commission of Architectural Review (CAR) approval or, in certain limited instances, there is a specific City approval (SUP, BZA or POD) requirement on the development. In these instances, the specific manufacturer is not important, but only the type and style of lighting proposed.

### **Permitting Suggestions**

It is recommended that electrical permit applications for properties be separated to accommodate the building (interior) electrical work and lighting and any exterior site lighting, so as not to delay issuance of the permit(s).

### **Other Lighting Issues**

The Zoning Ordinance (Section 30-670) specifies, "*Lighting shall be located, directed or shielded so as not to shine directly on adjoining properties or to create a traffic hazard by means of glare or similarity to or confusion with traffic signals, warning lights or lighting on emergency vehicles.*" (*Emphasis added*). Although not definitive, this has been interpreted to preclude property owners from installing flood lights that are specifically pointed at adjoining properties. A floodlight pointed at an adjoining house would meet the "directly" rule. A street light on public property or a security or porch light on private property, though of great illumination intensity, spreads light over a wide area with the main purpose to provide light below and to diffuse light along the street line or onto the property; this would not meet the "directly" rule. However, more importantly, lighting shining onto streets, flashing lights or similar illumination causing traffic or other inherent danger, would not be allowed. Very few complaints of this nature are received, with the Zoning Administrator having discretion on a case-by-case basis.