

LIGHT POLLUTION IN DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP

AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

For most of our history our spectacular universe has been visible in the darkness of the night sky. But today the increasing development and our living close together with the corresponding increase in inappropriate and unshielded outdoor lighting has resulted in light pollution. Have you looked up at night lately; tried to show your children the stars? The universe is going away, already gone for many due to urban sky glow.

Why use outdoor lighting at night? To see at night, for security, safety, utility, and for an attractive nighttime environment. But not all lighting is good lighting.

What are the adverse effects of poor nighttime lighting? Urban sky glow: we don't need all that light up there. Glare: can blind you to activity within the glare and it never helps visibility or safety. Light Trespass: many lighting installations bother us more than they help. The wasted light shines into our neighbor's yard or windows. As with noise pollution, we don't need any of this bad lighting. Energy waste: lighting areas that don't need lighting at times when it is not needed with inefficient lighting equals a waste of our money.

What can we all do?

Doylestown Township Code has requirements for all outdoor lighting to be shielded to reduce overhead glow, and directed downwards so as not to be a nuisance to traffic or neighbors. The code says "No bare or reflected lights shall be visible beyond the lot line." One common culprit is bare flood light bulbs above the garage doors or over the back lawn.

So use good lighting. Shine the light down. Use time controls. Design and install lighting to insure glare is minimized. Use the right amount of light for the task, energy efficiency will save you money.

Review your own lights. Go outside tonight with your outdoor lighting on. Can you see your bulbs from the street? Are your lights shining onto your neighbors' property or into their windows? If so, there are some simple ways to correct the nuisance.

Help is available.

There are some very informative websites that offer practical advice on how to address this form of pollution. These sites have links to shielded fixture suppliers, advice on how to approach a neighbor whose light is causing a nuisance and tips on good and effective lighting design: www.darksky.org www.POLCouncil.org . For fixtures www.greeneearthlighting.com www.starrynightlights.com www.rabweb.com. Also at local electrical supply houses ask for "dark sky" approved lighting. For those floodlights above the garage, look for the clip-on Parshield(R) Glare Visor, a very simple remedy.

Give us all, but especially the children of Doylestown, a safe, well lit Township, but one with a magical starry night.