Outdoor Lighting Ordinance

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City of Dripping Springs

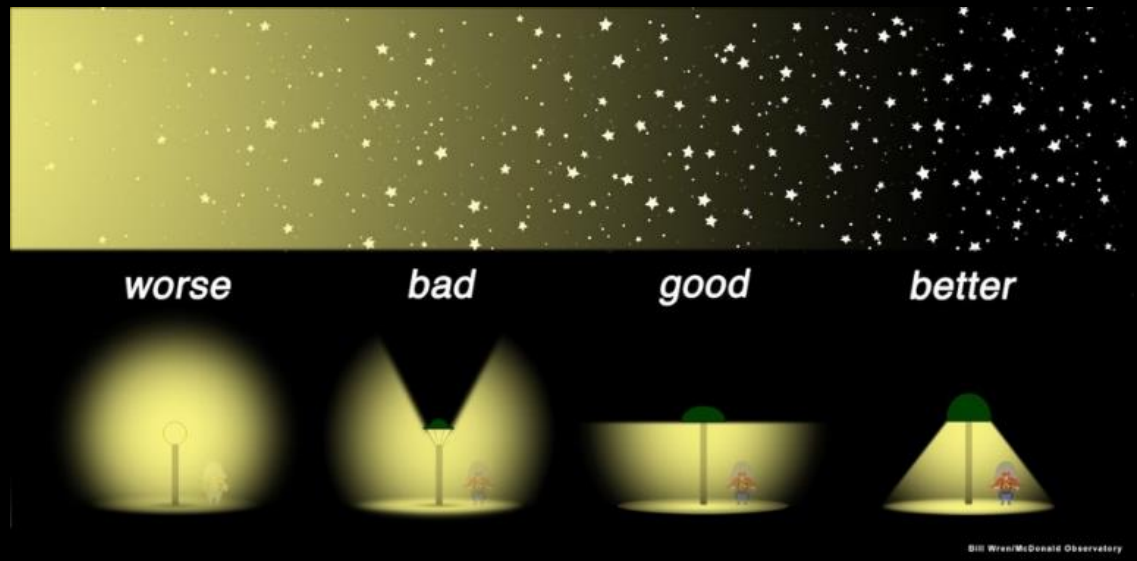
GOALS OF OUTDOOR LIGHTING ORDINANCE

Courtesy of Project Terra

- Reduce light pollution, including trespass, glare, sky glow, and clutter
- Improve safety
- Reduce energy consumption
- Reduce harm to human health and wildlife
- Preserve night time sky as a natural resource; improve visibility of stars

STEPS TO MINIMIZE LIGHT POLLUTION

- Use light only when and where needed
- Use only as much light as needed
- Aim lights down
- Use fully shielded or full cut-off lighting fixtures
- Minimize blue light emissions
- Use energy efficient lighting sources and fixtures
- Use timers, dimmers, and motion sensors

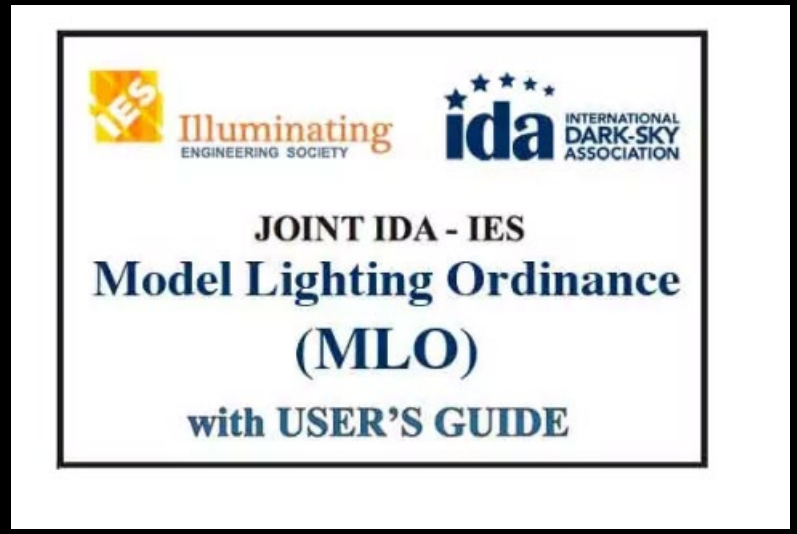


AUTHORITY TO REGULATE

- Zoning
- Building Codes
- Sign Regulations
- Historic Preservation
- Development Agreements
- Nuisance
- Condition of Approval (variance/waiver/special exception)
- Voluntary Compliance

COMPONENTS OF AN OUTDOOR LIGHTING ORDINANCE

- Definitions
- Scope: City Limits; apply to Extraterritorial Jurisdiction through voluntary compliance, agreements, or as condition of an approval
- New Lighting must comply:
  - Residential
  - Nonresidential
  - Street Lights



24 HOUR EMERGENCY
AMBULANCE

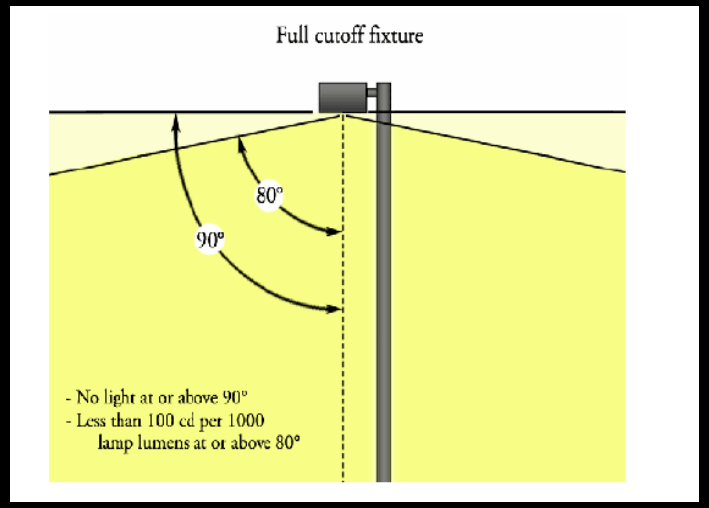
NONCONFORMING LIGHTING

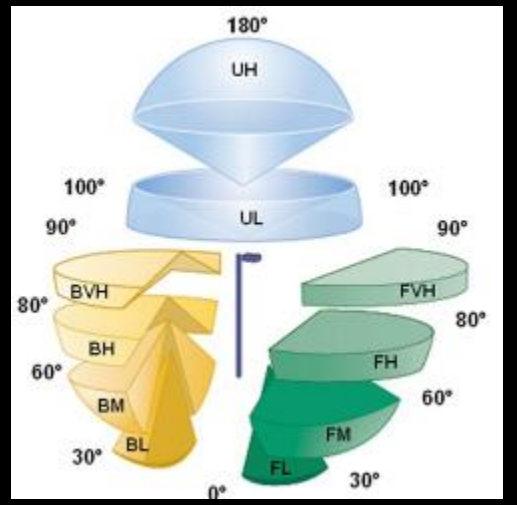
- Triggers for bringing it into compliance

- May not expand, repair, or replace
- Sunset Provision: nonconforming lighting required to be brought into compliance by certain date

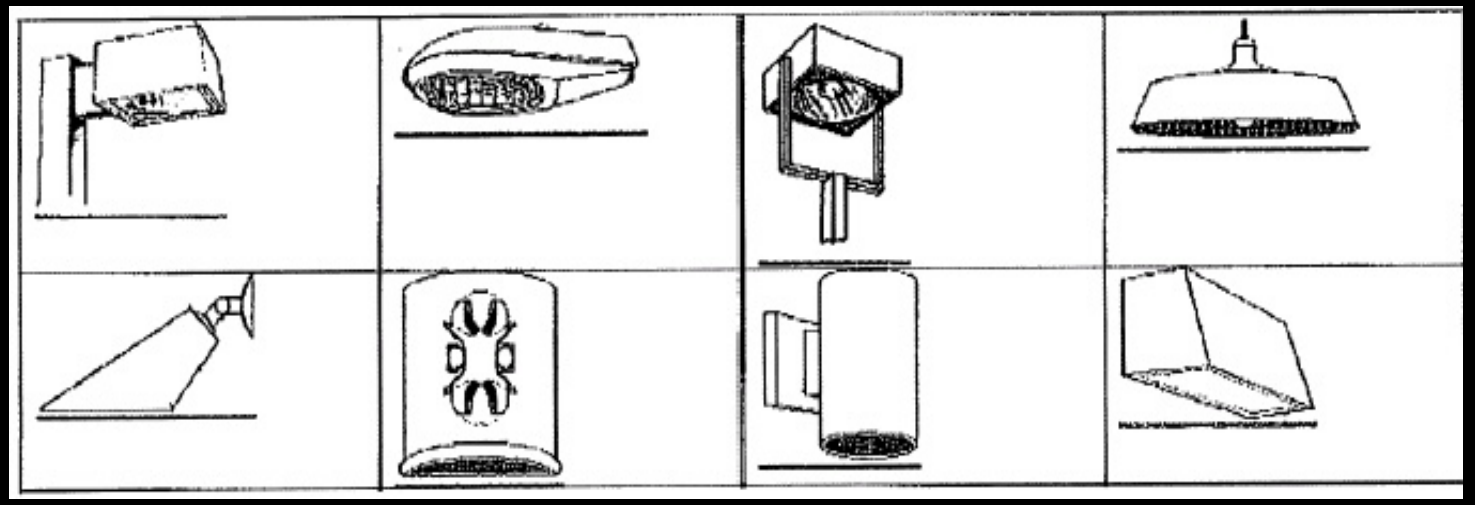
LIGHTING FIXTURES

- Shielding: outdoor lighting shall be shielded so that the luminous elements of the fixture are not visible from any other property (this relates glare)
- Outdoor lighting fixtures are not allowed to have light escape above a horizontal plane running through the lowest point of the luminous elements



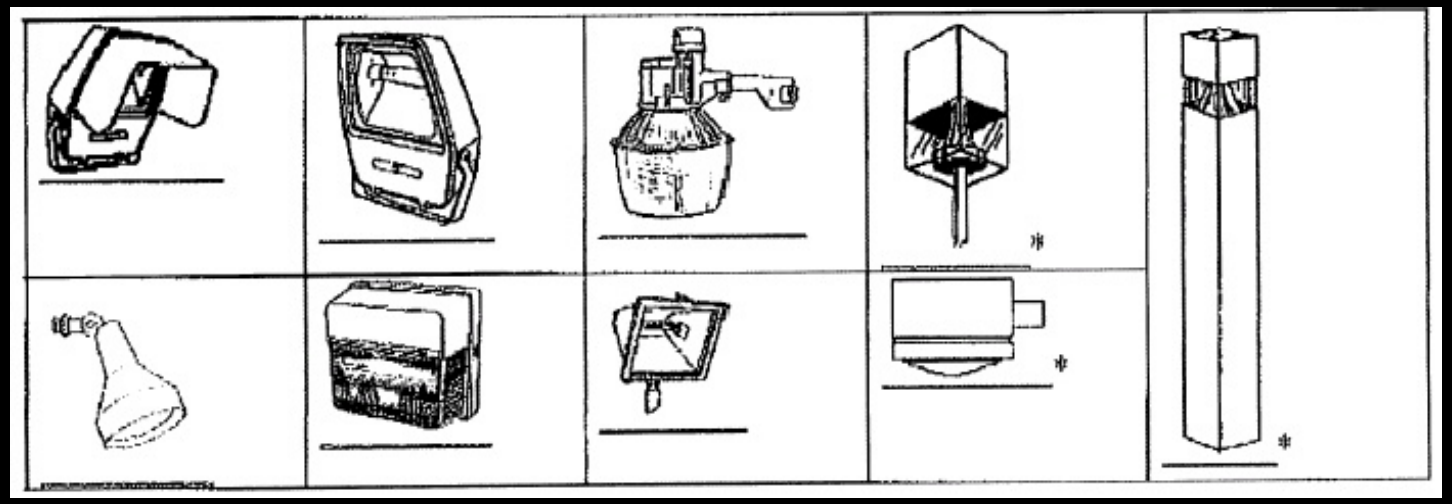


COMPLIANT LIGHT FIXTURES



Examples of fixtures that do not allow light to escape above a horizontal plane running through the lowest point of the luminous elements.

NONCOMPLIANT LIGHT FIXTURES



Examples of fixtures that allow light to escape above a horizontal plane running through the lowest point of the luminous elements.

Dark Sky Friendly

TOTAL OUTDOOR LIGHT OUTPUT

Set maximum lumens allowed per net acre

- Nonresidential property: 100,000 lumens/net acre
- Residential property: 25,000 lumens/net acre

OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

- Lumen cap exemptions do not apply
- Design to create minimum off-site spill, glare, and sky glow
- Fixtures for non-aerial sports shall be fully shielded to extent possible
- Designed and certified by registered engineer
- International Dark Sky Association Criteria for Community Friendly Outdoor Sports Lighting

Clemson Univ. field by Musco Lighting

LIGHTING FOR OUTDOOR SIGNS

- Regulate the colors of internally illuminated signs
- Must comply with other lighting regulations

Light Background ☒	Colored Background ☑	Opaque Background ☑
Mobil	Jalapeño Lou's	Mobil
ANIMAL HOSPITAL	THE HOME DEPOT	Hilton

CURFEWS

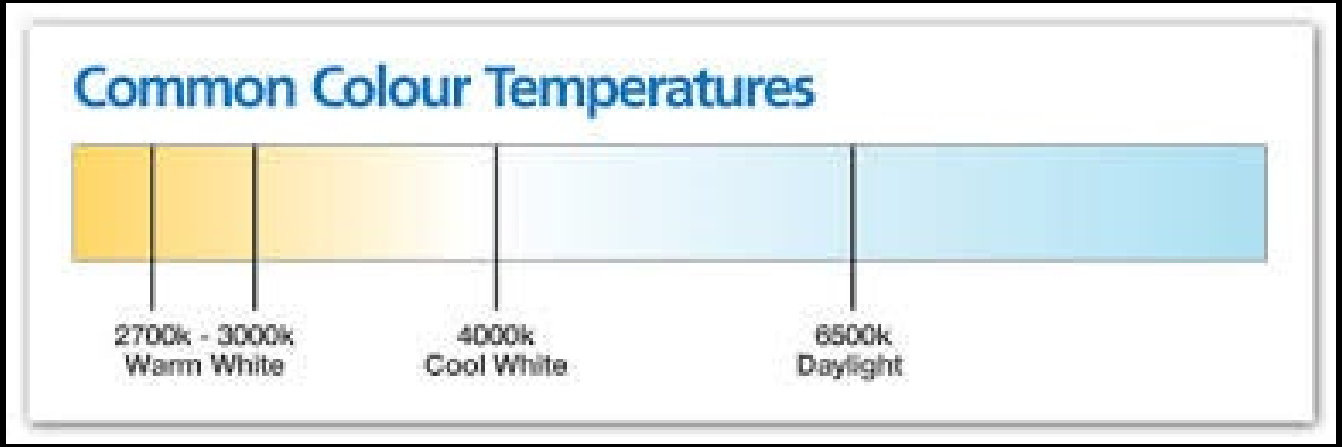
- Reduction of outdoor lighting output after closing by turning off lights or dimming lights
- Illuminated signs turned off by the later of closing time or 10:00 p.m., provided, however, that such signs may be turned back on prior to sunrise, but no more than one hour prior to opening
- Curfew for sport facility lights

MISCELLANEOUS

- Lighting under canopies, building overhangs and roof eaves
- Neon Lighting
- Flagpole lighting

PROHIBITIONS

- Mercury vapor fixture/lamp
- Outdoor uplighting (generally)
- Luminaries rated at more than 3,000 Kelvin
  (Higher kelvin rating allowed if Scotopic-to-Photopic ratio is no greater than 1.2)



COMMERCIAL PROCESS

Between these two phases is when the developer is trying to achieve approval for permitting, including lighting approval.

A New Development is Proposed

Site Development Phase

Building Phase

Inspection/ Final Phase

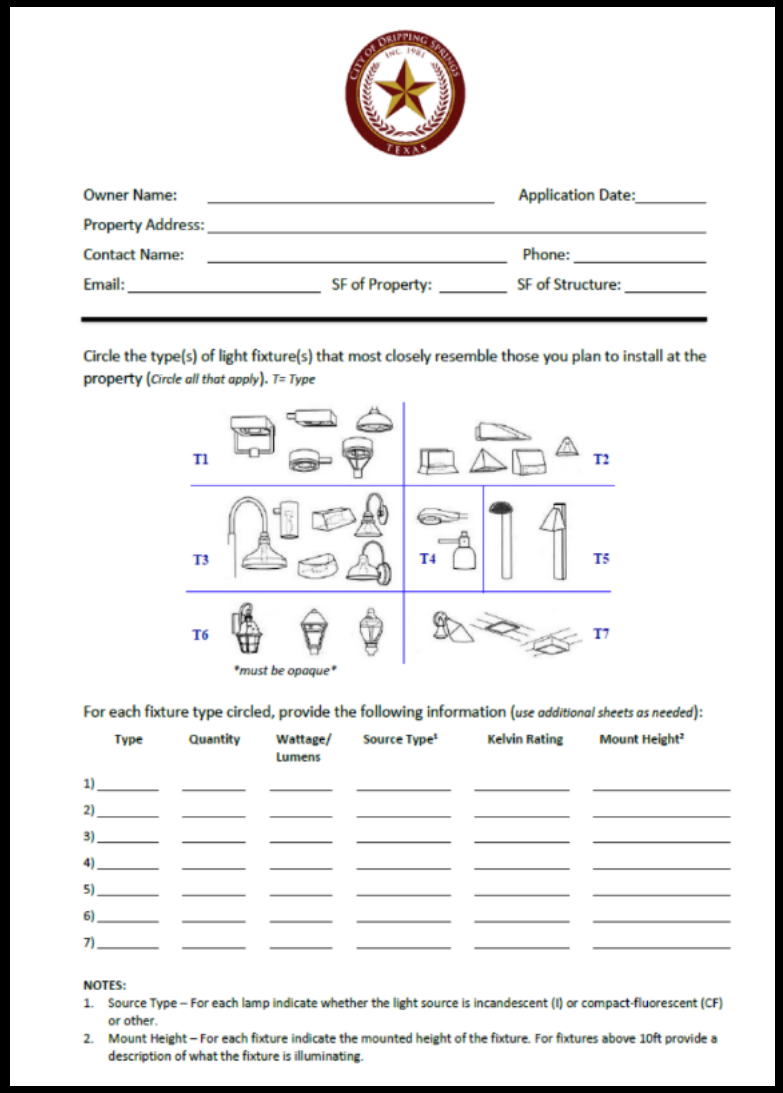
A Certificate of Occupancy will NOT be issued unless the new development is compliant.

SUBMISSION OF LIGHTING PLANS AND EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE

- Location of existing and proposed lighting fixtures
- Lumen calculation sheet to determine lumens per net acre
- Manufacturer's specification sheets
- Elevations where fixtures to be installed
- Site plan with measurements for area to be illuminated

- Submit with site plan or building permit application
- Certificate of Occupancy is not issued until compliance is verified through field inspection

RESIDENTIAL PROCESS



Owner Name: _____ Application Date: _____

Property Address: _____

Contact Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ SF of Property: _____ SF of Structure: _____

Circle the type(s) of light fixture(s) that most closely resemble those you plan to install at the property (*Circle all that apply*). *T= Type*

T1 T2 T3 T4 T5 T6 T7

must be opaque

For each fixture type circled, provide the following information (*use additional sheets as needed*):

	Type	Quantity	Wattage/ Lumens	Source Type[1]	Kelvin Rating	Mount Height[2]
1)						
2)						
3)						
4)						
5)						
6)						
7)						

NOTES:

1. Source Type – For each lamp indicate whether the light source is incandescent (I) or compact-fluorescent (CF) or other.
2. Mount Height – For each fixture indicate the mounted height of the fixture. For fixtures above 10ft provide a description of what the fixture is illuminating.

- Builders typically have a pre-selected compliant fixtures and some home buyers select different fixtures.
- To ensure compliant fixtures are actually installed, we implemented a checks & balances process.
- The application can be submitted with the building permit application or later in the building process. Before a Certificate of Occupancy is issued, we perform an onsite inspection to ensure compliance and to verify the information on the form is accurate.

EXEMPTIONS

- Maximum output of 180 lumens per fixture may be unshielded
- Maximum output of 360 lumens per fixture which are shielded with medium to dark tone lens that reduces lumen output by half
- Lights required by law or needed during law enforcement, fire, or other emergency services
- Lights used during repairs of roads and utilities
- Lighting required for operation of aircraft

EXEMPTIONS

- Holiday lights
- Low-output festoon lamps on string, mini-lights, and rope lights
- Temporary lighting for theatrical, television, performance areas, events, and constructions areas provided they are positioned to not shine in eyes of passing drivers and so that they are shielded from other property

ENFORCEMENT

- Civil and Criminal Penalties, Criminal Prosecution, Civil Remedies, Alternative Relief

- Person commits offense by installing outdoor lighting:
    - Contrary to ordinance
    - Without obtaining a permit

- Public Nuisance: Light that results in light trespass or unreasonable interference with use of neighboring property is declared public nuisance

SPREAD THE WORD

- Press releases, newsletters, blogs, workshops
- Website and social media
- Speak with local community organizations and homeowners associations
- Inform local companies that sell lighting fixtures and get them to carry compliant fixtures
- Send a letter to contractors who do work in your community
- Set an example by bringing City lighting fixtures into compliance

PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Recognize businesses that comply
- Create a grant fund to help bring nonconforming lights into compliance
- Sponsor star gazing parties
- Sponsor educational and recreational events
- Promotion by new compliant developments

Questions?

ida INTERNATIONAL DARK-SKY ASSOCIATION

DRIPPING SPRINGS, TEXAS
INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY COMMUNITY

www.darksky.org

Advice from a STREET LIGHT™

Light the way with respect

See the big picture

Work in harmony with nature

Show up when and where you're needed

Avoid glaring errors

Stay close to the earth

Sometime's it's ok to be in the dark!

Your True Nature®