



Is Gunnison County's night sky worth saving ?

We think so.

Do you like Gunnison County's dark night sky and bright stars? Do you like the rural character of Gunnison County?

One of the reasons you have moved to Gunnison County is probably because of the beautiful environment—including the dark skies.

Today Gunnison County is a lightly populated rural area with spectacular night skies. Many Gunnison County residents want to preserve this unique part of our community. Good lighting does its intended job well and with minimum adverse impact to the environment.

You can do your part to help preserve this resource by installing well designed outdoor lighting. Unshielded lights broadcast glare for tens of miles. An unshielded yard light viewed across one of our valleys through our crystal clear air is many times brighter than the brightest star. Upward directed stray beams from unshielded or poorly-shielded lights reflect from particles in the atmosphere and cause 'sky glow' that obscures the millions of dimmer stars.

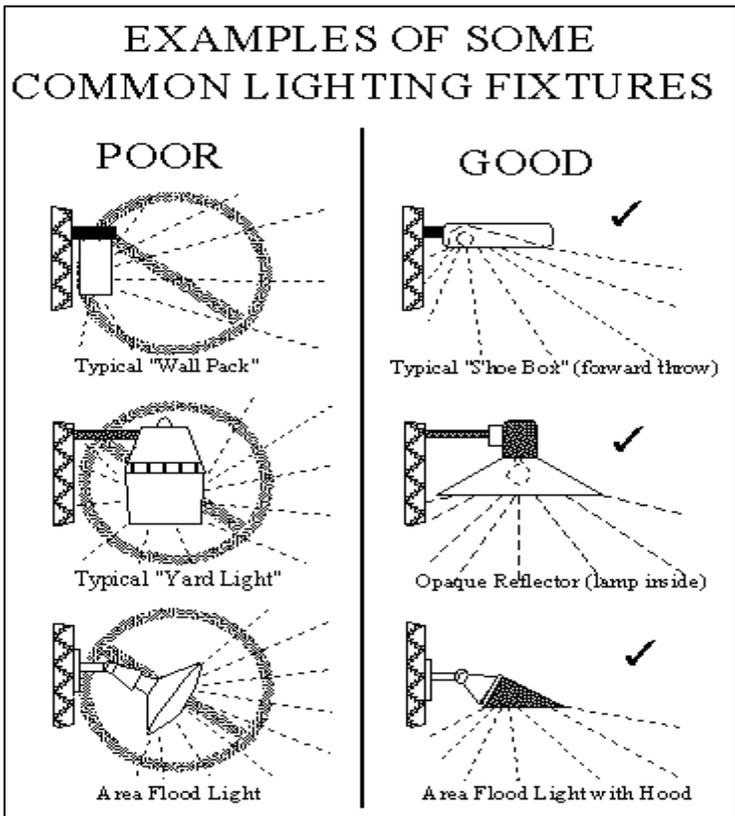
Good lighting at night benefits everyone. It provides us with better visibility for nighttime chores and a sense of security.

Most of us want some outdoor lighting, so what do we do? The answer is relatively simple... It's the same principle as putting a lamp shade over a bare bulb. Our regulations allow use of unshielded fixtures with 60-watt bulbs or less. (Any bulbs of greater wattage are required to be shielded.) We're asking the folks who put up new lights to use lights with a hood or shield that will direct the light down to the ground where it is needed and not up into the sky or across the valley their at neighbors.

Some modern lighting systems illuminate areas to a level 100 times as bright as the full moon! Too bright an area on the ground can cause GLARE where people or objects in the shadows become invisible. Careful positioning of light fixtures will also maximize the effectiveness of the illumination.

Fixtures should be positioned to give adequate uniformity of the illuminated area. A few bright fixtures (or ones that are too low to the ground) can often create bright "hot spots" that make the areas in between seem dark.

Even well shielded fixtures placed on tall poles on a property boundary can cast a lot of light onto neighboring properties.



- Try to keep the lighting uniform and *reduce glare* as much as possible. Lights that make bright "hot spots" and ones that have glare make it hard to see well.
- Be aware that light fixtures can have different lighting patterns. (Some patterns are long and narrow light cones, while others are more symmetrical.) Install the right pattern for your job.
- Consider using lights that turn on by motion detection to save operating costs and have the benefit of "instant-on" characteristics. Some can also be turned on manually. These light fixtures are not expensive, and they use very little energy.
- Retrofit existing fixtures:

“**Light trespass**” greatly reduces and invades privacy and is difficult to resolve after the installation is complete. To reduce both operating costs and save energy, use high efficiency lights such as high pressure sodium or metal halide. Both of these cast a more yellowish light and are easier on human eyes.

Some Basic Considerations:

- Lighting should *benefit people*. Controlled, effective, efficient lighting at your home or business will enhance the surroundings and give a sense of safety and security. People don't appreciate poorly-installed, overly-bright lighting.
- Check your site at night before installing lighting and note the existing light levels. If the area has low levels of lighting, then modest levels of light will work well for you and will fit more hospitably in the neighborhood.

