

OUTDOOR LIGHTING REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS  
Archuleta County Land Use Regulations Section 5

**5.4.4 Outdoor Lighting:**

It is the intent of these Regulations to provide outdoor lighting standards and systems which will curtail the degradation of the night time visual environment and minimize light pollution, glare, and light trespass, while, at the same time, maintaining nighttime pedestrian and vehicular safety, utility and security, consistent with the Community Plan. All exterior lighting fixtures, including without limitation commercial, industrial, residential, governmental and street lighting installed after the effective date of these Regulations shall comply. All exterior lighting fixtures installed prior to the effective date of these Regulations are exempt from the requirements of this Section for a period of five (5) years from that date. After this five (5) year period, all outdoor lighting shall comply with the Regulations. These Regulations shall not apply to interior lighting.

5.4.4.1 If a nonconforming fixture is replaced, the replacement fixture shall meet the requirements of these Regulations. Similarly, a conforming fixture shall not be replaced with a nonconforming fixture. A conforming fixture may be replaced with another conforming fixture.

5.4.4.2 Variance to these provisions of this Outdoor Lighting Section will be provided in situations where the applicant can provide written evidence that these Regulations are in conflict with OSHA requirements.

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5-18 Amended 9/2006, 2/2007, 10/2016, 6/2018 7/2018, 5/2019, 5/2021, 10/2021, 05/2022 02/2023

5.4.4.3 Prohibited Lighting

(1) Any fixture that is not fully shielded with opaque or translucent shielding. Partially shielded fixtures, partial cut-off fixtures and unshielded fixtures are not permitted.

(2) Blinking, flashing, or changing intensity lights, except for lighting required by a governmental authority such as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for air traffic control, or local, state, or federal agencies for vehicular traffic control and warning purposes. (Note: blinking holiday lights are not included in this restriction.)

(3) Beacon, laser, or searchlights.

(4) Mercury Vapor fixtures and or lamps.

(5) Any fixture that impairs motorist safety by casting glare or direct light into the eyes of drivers.

(6) Any fixture that is not directed at the ground or task area or is aimed onto an adjoining property.

(7) Any fixture, or group of fixtures, that produces a light intensity, or cumulative light intensity, that exceeds one-half (0.5) foot-candle at any property line.

(8) Any compliant fixtures that are altered or installed improperly, such that they cast light in a non-compliant manner.

5.4.4.4 Special Situations

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(1) Lights used for the illumination of stadium and other outdoor sports arenas must be extinguished by 10:00 p.m. or immediately after the conclusion of the final event. No new event, activity, or game may start after 10:00 p.m. The remainder of the facility lights, except for reasons of safety or security, must be extinguished at 10:00 p.m. or within one (1) hour after the conclusion of the final event.

(2) Upward flagpole lighting may be employed for government and institutional illumination of government flags after dusk. The light must be directly aimed at the flag, must be narrowly focused, and must only be sufficient to properly illuminate the flag.

(3) Airport operations lighting and aircraft navigational beacons that are required and controlled by regulations established by the FAA are permitted. All other outdoor airport lighting must conform to these Regulations.

(4) Carnivals, fairs, special events and festivals that require the use of temporary outdoor lighting fixtures are exempt from these Regulations, except that permanent installations must conform to these Regulations, and in no event shall lighting be allowed to impair motorist safety in any fashion.

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(5) Light shall not be considered to be trespassing if the adjacent property owners have mutually agreed to share the illumination provided by one or more fixtures, irrespective of their shared property lines. This light must still be kept on the subject properties, and must not exceed one-half (0.5) foot-candle at other property lines leading to other uninvolved properties. Further, care must be taken to ensure that the light generated does not impair motorist safety in any fashion.

(6) Fixtures mounted on buildings or other structures shall not exceed a mounting height greater than four (4) feet higher than the tallest part of the building or structure. All other requirements shall also be met, as applicable.

(7) Downward pointing “wall-washer” (wall-mounted sconce-style) fixtures may be installed subject to the limitations of Section 5.4.4.3. Wall-washer fixtures that direct light both downward and upward, (or upward only), are also permitted, provided that the fixture is fully shielded horizontally, both top and bottom, and that a protruding roof (such as a porch roof or a driveway canopy) or an eave is positioned directly above the fixture, to block light from being directed into the night sky. Wall washer fixtures that upwardly direct light must be positioned no more than six feet below a roof or eave which projects out from the wall and the light fixture sufficient to prevent any direct light passing vertically beyond the roof or eave. Further, if the fixture is mounted near a building’s corner, it can be no less than six feet from the vertical plane of the eave at the corner.

(8) Holiday lighting shall be exempt from the shielding requirement when utilizing 7.5 watt or smaller lamps, and is used for temporary “holiday” lighting. All other requirements shall be met, as applicable.

(9) Walking path fixtures of 9.0 watts or less each are exempt from the shielding requirement, provided that, all other requirements are met, as applicable.

(10) Camping lights that produce light directly from natural gas or propane are permitted, and exempt from the shielding requirements, provided that they are used intermittently for their intended purposes and not used as regular outdoor lighting. All other requirements shall be met, as applicable.

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- (11) Exposed neon lighting is exempt from the shielding requirement, provided that, all other requirements are met, as applicable.
- (12) Agricultural lighting fixtures for the purpose of working livestock at night are exempt from the shielding requirement, except that they shall not project light directly into the sky, nor be illuminated when it is not necessary to be actively working with livestock. All other requirements shall be met, as applicable.
- (13) Visible light sources equipped with motion detector devices that stay lit no longer than 5 minutes provided they do not impair traffic safety.