

Light Nuisance and Security Lighting

How to Avoid and Deal with Problems

In 2006 the law was changed to include 'light nuisance' as a statutory nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This new power allows Councils to take legal action against those responsible who continue to cause light nuisance despite being advised of a problem.

It is well known that the majority of complaints about light arise from security lighting installations, usually on domestic premises. Well designed, installed and maintained security lights can provide security to homes and businesses. However, security lighting must be installed with consideration of its suitability for the task and its effect on neighbours and the environment. Security lights should provide the minimum level of illumination necessary to light a property, without causing neighbours or passers by a nuisance.

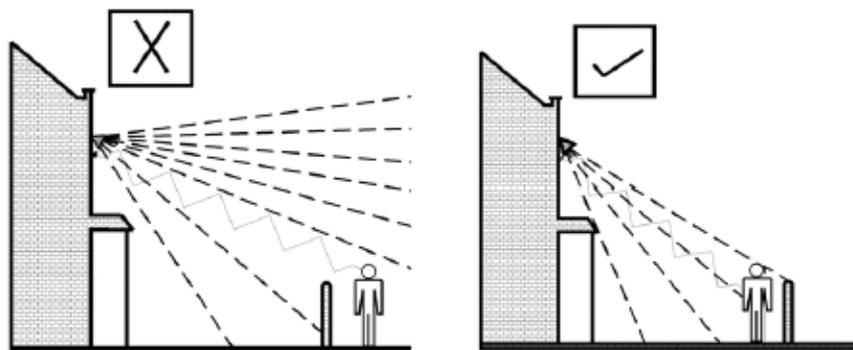
This leaflet is designed to offer some useful advice to those planning to purchase and install security lighting, and to existing owners of security lighting. If you are reading this leaflet because a neighbour has complained, then by following the advice which follows, it should be possible for you to apply some simple adjustments or modifications to stop light nuisance bothering your neighbours, and even to save energy!

Is your light too bright?

Because of price and ease of installation, many people install tungsten halogen floodlights. These units can provide satisfactory security lighting if correctly installed and aimed. However, whilst some light fittings are purchased with 300W lamps, it is rarely necessary to use a lamp of greater than 150W. In fact, the use of a higher power only causes more glare and darker shadows, and glare affects our ability to see. Dark shadows also offer a convenient hiding place for criminals!

Movement Detectors

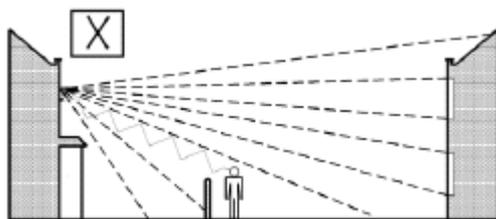
Many domestic type floodlights are fitted with detectors to sense the movement of intruders onto premises. Unfortunately if badly installed and poorly aimed they can also detect small animals roaming around the garden, and even pedestrians on the footpath, causing the light to switch on and off pointlessly and throughout the night. This intermittent switching can itself be a nuisance to neighbours, and is also an unnecessary waste of energy. Floodlights and detectors should be aimed to only detect and light people on your property, and not passers by in the street!



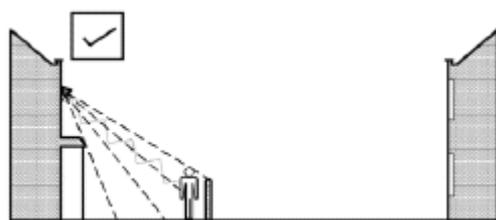
Buying Tip! When buying a security light, check to see if the detector can be separately aimed from the light or better still purchase a separate detector, which can be installed in the best position and correctly aimed to minimise unnecessary switching. Some floodlights are fitted with a timer, which can be adjusted to the minimum hours of operation needed, and which can provide a solution to any time related problems, whilst also saving energy and running costs!

Prevent light overspill

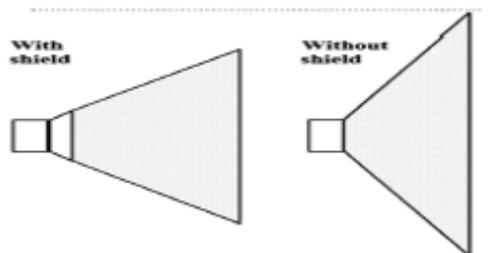
When aiming floodlights make sure you only light the area that needs lighting. The aim of the floodlight can easily be checked at night when you can see the actual area being lit.



Be careful not to allow excessive bright light to spill over into neighbours properties, especially not into their windows, as this will lead to complaints!



If a neighbour approaches you about your security lamp, please try to understand their complaint. Stopping a light nuisance can often be sorted by simply adjusting the angle of the unit downward. If after adjusting the angle and aim of the floodlight it is still causing problems, then consider fitting a hood or shield to control and restrict the light to the area to be lit.



Better Solutions

For many domestic properties, a better solution for security lighting than floodlights is to use bulkhead or porch lights fitted with low power, energy saving 9/11W compact fluorescent lamps. These units can be left lit to provide all night security, and often have built in light sensors so they only operate when necessary, during hours of darkness. Besides consuming less electricity and costing much less to run, this type of light provides a gentle wash of light with reduced glare. Bulkhead and porch lights cast fewer shadows reducing the hiding places for criminals. If you do not want to leave the light on all night, some incorporate a movement detector. These units are generally mounted lower and are therefore less susceptible to unnecessary intermittent switching and associated complaints from neighbours, especially when fitted with low energy lamps.

