



Environmental Nuisance - Light Nuisance

Light can cause a nuisance to neighbours and interfere with their normal daily activities. If severe enough, it can impact on people's health. In a residential situation, light can come from numerous sources including security lights, spotlights and floodlights. This fact sheet includes information that may assist residents to reduce light impacts and meet legal requirements.

Be a Good Neighbour

Take the time to talk to neighbours. Although the light may not affect you, that doesn't mean that it isn't affecting other people. Find out what concerns they may have and ask for suggestions about solving any problems they are having. In many cases an agreement can be reached that satisfies everyone's needs.

The Law

The Environmental Protection Act 1994 introduced by the State Government includes controls for light. When issues between neighbours cannot be resolved and further complaints are made, Council will then have to investigate the matter. Council is legally required to investigate complaints about light nuisance and take enforcement actions when a light nuisance from a residential property is identified.

If the light is found to be a nuisance, Council may issue the residence causing the light nuisance, a 'direction notice'. A direction notice will detail what offence has taken place and the timeframe that the offender has to rectify the problem. If the direction notice is not complied with, Council may then issue an on-the-spot fine.

It is important to note that Council's Planning Scheme, may also govern light issues in the case of light from commercial sites and activities.

The Criteria

When investigating a light complaint, Council will consider:

- The amount of light being emitted;
- The duration and rate of emission and the light's characteristics and qualities;

- The sensitivity of the environment into which the light is being emitted and the impact that it has had or may have; and
- Views of any other neighbours or complainants.

Ways to Reduce Light Emissions

- Switch off lights when not required for safety, security or enhancement of a night-time scene. Sensor switches can be appropriate sometimes.
- Locate the light source as far as possible from neighbours and away from sensitive areas (eg bedroom windows).
- Avoid placing the light near a light reflective surface and use existing features to hide the light source from view.
- Wherever possible, direct light downwards, not upwards, to illuminate the target area. If there is no alternative to up lighting, then the use of shields and baffles will help keep spill light to a minimum.
- Use specifically designed lighting equipment that, once installed, minimises the spread of light near to, or above the horizontal.
- Do not over light. It is a cause of light pollution and a waste of money.
- To keep glare to a minimum, ensure that the main beam angle of all lights directed towards any sensitive place is kept below 70°.

For further information on this topic, please contact Gladstone Regional Council's - Environmental Health Section on (07) 4977 6821.

How can you contact us?



(07) 4970 0700

STD CALLS: 1300 733 343

For those residents who currently incur STD call rates when contacting their local customer service centre



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