



High glare lights reduce your chances of seeing criminals, vandals or unwanted activities. This applies to streetlights as well as area lighting around your house and neighborhood.

Choose well-placed, sensor-based lighting with appropriate low-glare fixtures for best results.

Research into lighting and its effects on crime have been undertaken in various countries around the world. Anecdotes, as well, have supplemented the findings. After reviewing the research and anecdotal evidence on this issue, we have concluded the following:

1. Based on valid research, there is no apparent relationship between street lighting and levels of crime.
2. Changing street lighting from semi-cut-off or non-cut-off to full cut-off fixtures has no bearing on the number or type of crimes in the area.
3. Increasing or decreasing street lighting values has no relationship to crimes within an area
4. Criminals, having the same fears as most humans, tend to avoid dark places.
5. Lighting an area is not a deterrent to those intent on criminal activity. It can, on the other hand, produce a false sense of security.
6. Eliminating lighting on property appears to reduce or eliminate criminal/vandal activity. As with any human, they do have to see what they are doing and be aware of any security systems in use, including dogs, cameras, etc.
7. Increased lighting of a public area may lead to increased use by the public and, consequently, increased crime as targets and security measures are easily visible and can be dealt with.
8. Bad lighting fixtures and practices, such as those which produce high glare, may actually assist the criminal as he/she can hide in dark shadow areas.
9. High glare lighting and bad lighting practices put victims at increased risk since they may not see an attacker lurking in the shadows or outside the lit area. Light can be an enemy!
10. Well-designed sensor-based security lighting is effective in combating criminal activity. Any quick change in lighting levels may attract attention, compelling people to investigate and take action as necessary.

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11. Most property crimes occur during daylight hours.
12. Most assault types of crimes occur between people who know each other. This has little to do with street or exterior lighting.

Research indicates that increasing the light in some instances may actually lead to more crime as more people, as well as criminals, are attracted to brightly lit areas. As an example, more crimes may be committed in mall areas than in the darker back streets of a community.

Anecdotal evidence exists indicating that removing light sources or shutting them off may reduce vandalism and unwanted visitors from an area. This applies to farmyards as well. Shutting off farm yard lights has led to dramatic drops in unwanted visitors. As they cannot see what is in the yard and cannot detect any ‘security,’ such as dogs, they do not know what lies in wait for them. This fear of the unknown may well serve as the basis for the decision not to go into the area, an expected outcome as most people, including vandals, fear the dark and unknown.

As previously indicated, most lighting only serves to reduce fear of the dark and unknown as opposed to actually reducing crime. The solution to the problem is to adopt ‘good lighting practices.’ This means using light appropriately at the right time and the right place for the right reasons. Leaving yard lights on all night may only serve to attract vandals or criminals. Full cut-off lights on sensors are a much more environmentally-friendly, economical method of providing light when you really need it. As well, sensor-based lighting serves to alert you to a presence when the light goes on unexpectedly. The light that is continually on serves only the criminal while driving up your power bill.

Do a light audit around your home or business to check the types of lighting used for security. Lights should not produce high glare, leaving areas for criminals to hide in the shadows. Lights should only be on when someone is there. Change exterior lights to sensor-based lighting. As well, know your neighbors. Set up a good communications system to combat vandalism and criminals in your community.



Some schools have cut vandalism dramatically by shutting off all lights around the school.