



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

OVERVIEW

Outdoor Lighting Zoning Ordinance Amendment Effective February 12, 2020

What Changes Were Approved?

The text of the approved Zoning Ordinance amendment related to outdoor lighting can be found here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zoning-ordinance/amendments/recently-adopted>

Color Temperature:

All lights must have a correlated color temperature of 3,000K or less, except sports fields or courts that are subject to a sports illumination plan may have a color temperature of up to 5,700K.

Exemptions for Single Family Dwellings:

The initial light output for a light fixture on a lot developed with a single family dwelling to be exempt is reduced from 2,000 to 1,500 lumens. In addition, the exemption only applies to the full cut-off requirement and certain other provisions. Color temperature still applies to exempt fixtures.

Exemptions for Motion-activated Lights:

The initial light output for a motion-activated light on a lot developed with a single family dwelling to be exempt is reduced from 6,000 to 4,000 lumens. The light must turn off within five minutes of the motion ceasing and the light must be directed within the property boundary. For other uses, motion-activated lights are exempt if the light is directed within the property boundary.

Sports Illumination Plans (SIPs):

Hours for Residential Outdoor Playing Field/Court Lighting:

The lighting of playing fields or courts that are subject to a SIP on lots with single family dwellings must turn off at 10:00 p.m. instead of 11:00 p.m.

Perimeter Areas for SIPs:

Revisions were made to the perimeter areas for certain types of sports. In addition, the Ordinance now specifies that the perimeter areas must be located entirely on the same lot as the playing field or court.



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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Architectural Review Board Review:

The ARB now reviews all SIPs, even if submitted as a stand-alone plan, within Historic Overlay Districts.

Definition of Lumen:

The definition has been clarified that it means the cumulative light output of the fixture, even if it contains two or more bulbs.

When Do These New Provisions Apply?

The new standards for color temperature, exemptions for single family dwellings, and exemptions for motion-activated lights apply to new or replacement light fixtures. Routine fixture maintenance such as changing the light bulb does not require compliance with these new standards, except that it cannot result in a higher lumen level or in a color temperature that exceeds the new standard. This means that bulbs don't need to be replaced to comply with the new standards right away, but when bulbs are replaced, they must conform to the new color temperature standard, and for exempt fixtures, the lumens either need to comply or not be increased.

Questions?

If you have additional questions about the Zoning Ordinance requirements, please contact Carmen Bishop in the Zoning Administration Division at 703-324-1314. To report a violation, contact the Department of Code Compliance at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/code/> or 703-324-1300.