



Well designed, installed and maintained security lights bring comfort and well being to our lives, providing us with a sense of security in our homes.

However, much security lighting is installed without due consideration of its suitability for the task and its effect on neighbours and the environment.

Domestic security lights should provide the minimum level of illumination necessary to light a property. Whilst you may be happy with a light that illuminates half the street your neighbours may not.

With the need for instant illumination and low initial cost, many people install tungsten halogen floodlights. While these luminaires can provide satisfactory security lighting if correctly installed and aimed.



They are usually sold with relatively high - powered 9,500 lumen (500w) lamps that are rarely necessary in the domestic situation where a lamp of 1000 lumens (150W) should be adequate.

The use of a too high a power not only wastes energy and money but also causes more glare and darker shadows. Glare also affects our ability to see and the dark shadows offer a convenient hiding place for criminals.

"Some luminaires are fitted with special optics that also help reduce light pollution. Called "double asymmetric" they can be aimed facing downwards while still spreading light over a wide distance. They can normally be identified where the lamp is fitted not in the middle of the unit, but closer to the back edge as shown in the image above."



Obtrusive Light

How to reduce it

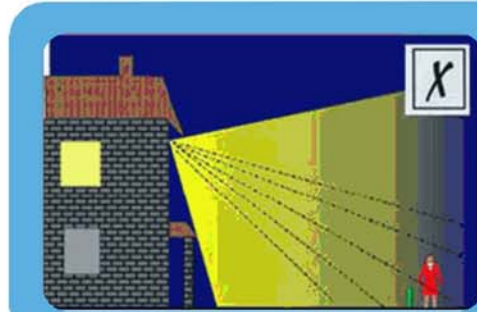
Many luminaires are fitted with integral switching detectors to sense the movement of intruders.



However, if possible use a separate detector that can be sited in a more ideal position where it is most likely to detect intruders into your property, rather than neighbours taking the dog for a walk or small animals roaming around the garden causing the light to switch on and off throughout the night.

Movement detectors can be useful if they are correctly installed and aimed.

"Luminaires and detectors should be aimed to only detect and light people on your property. They should not detect a person or animals walking down the street. If the detector is fitted with a timer, this should be adjusted to the minimum to reduce the operation of the light. When aiming floodlights make sure you only light the area that needs lighting."



Unfortunately, many systems do not allow the detector to be separately aimed from the luminaire.

Remember, when buying such equipment check to see if the detector can be separately aimed, or better still purchase a separate detector, which can be installed in the best position and correctly aimed to minimise unnecessary switching.

The aim of the floodlight can easily be checked at night when you can see the actual area being lit. Be careful not to put light onto other people's properties or into windows, as this can be very upsetting and a constant source of complaint.



For many properties, a better solution for security lighting is to use a bulk-head or porch light fitted with a low power 600-900 lumens (9/11 w) compact fluorescent lamp.

These units can also be left lit all night, providing all night security, for only a few pounds of electricity per year. Besides being cheap to run, this type of luminaire is kinder to the environment providing a gentle wash of light with reduced glare. Bulkhead and porch lights cast fewer shadows reducing the hiding places for criminals. Such luminaires can also be fitted with a movement detector if required and are generally mounted lower, and are therefore less susceptible to nuisance switching and complaints from neighbours.

"If a neighbour does approach you about your security light listen carefully and try to understand their complaint. If you can, adjust the luminaire to shine in a different direction or angle it down to reduce the light onto or into their property. Tell them that is what you will do and when you will do the work. If after adjusting the angle and aim of a floodlight it is still causing annoyance, then consider fitting some sort of hood or louvre to shield the light from where it is not wanted."

Remember:

- Don't automatically choose the most powerful lamp – the added contrast and darker shadows can help hid the criminal rather than expose them.

Note: LIGHT output is measured in “lumens” not in “watts” which is the energy input – read the label carefully.

- Position and aim any floodlights with care so as to illuminate only your own property. Put the light where it will do most good – not where it will do most harm.
- If planning to use an IR detector for switching, consider the benefits of being able to position and aim it independently of the luminaire and if so, buy accordingly.
- Switch off any unnecessary lights - it is a waste of the world's resources and of your money.