

Outdoor Lighting Design Checklist

IDA often gets asked the question: How can we evaluate a lighting installation? Here is a short, but effective, answer to that question.

How to evaluate a lighting installation:

1. Does it need to be lit?
2. If so, for what purpose?
3. To what lighting level?
4. Do any of the luminaires emit light above 90 degrees?
5. Is light trespass an issue?
6. Is glare or perceived glare an issue?

Then one can make the following recommendations:

1. Don't light it.
or
2. Turn off the lights when not needed.
3. Put light only where it is needed!
4. Eliminate all light emission above the horizontal plane.
5. Minimize light output at high angles (70 to 90 degrees from the vertical).
6. Eliminate light trespass with proper choice luminaires and optics.
7. Conceal the lamp source and bright reflector sections from direct view.
8. Use energy-efficient lighting sources and luminaires.

All of these recommendations should improve the quality of the lighting installation, minimizing glare, light trespass, urban sky glow, and energy waste, while improving the efficacy, efficiency, and ambiance of the lighting installation.

Thanks to Paul Lutkevich, of Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts. Paul is currently the Chairman of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America's Roadway Lighting Committee, and an active lighting designer.