

How to Approach Your Neighbor



Approach them in a friendly way. They're worried about their security and safety. They tried to do something about it. Maybe they saw an ad from the utility company, or elsewhere, touting these specific lights. Maybe they got a "good deal" from the power company. Maybe they just didn't know what to do, but thought that adding a lot of light would help. Don't tell them (particularly in an unfriendly way) to shut off their light because it bothers you. They won't, and you will likely have hardened their position.

Make positive approaches. Help them solve their problem. Offer alternatives. Be flexible to their particular need. Ask for their advice in solving your problem with their light. Most people really like to be helpful, when they can. Let them know how. Be prepared to compromise, but always keep the overall goal in mind. You want and need dark skies, and no light trespass. You also want a secure and safe nighttime environment, just as they do. You want to help the country save energy and money. Show that you care, for all of those things in general, for your sky, and for them.

Dollars and Sense

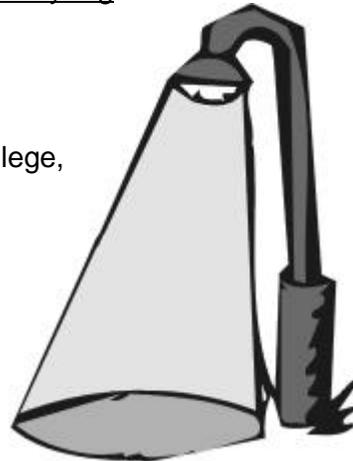
Quality Low Pressure Sodium (LPS) fixtures can cost more than the cheap 175 watt mercury ones, especially in an area where few LPS fixtures are sold. But even if they cost \$120, they begin to save lots of energy and money the day they are installed. For example, 175 watts minus 35 watts is 140 watts, at times 4100 hours of use per year, yields 574 kilowatt hours saved per year. At 8 cents per KWH, that is \$46 dollars saved per year compared to a mercury light. So, the payoff period to replace a mercury vapor light with an effective LPS one is \$120 divided by \$46 or about two and a half years. If one considers the cost of the mercury fixture, say \$30, then it's $\$120 - \$30 = \$90$ extra cost, and $\$90$ divided by $\$46$ gives a payoff period of only two years. The spotlight solution has an even faster payoff period. Very few energy savings concepts have shorter payoff periods than replacing ineffective and inefficient security lights with better ones.

For More Information

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How to **talk** to your neighbor who has a **bad light**



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EXTENSION

Typical Bad Light Scenario

Your neighbors have just installed a dusk-to-dawn 175 watt mercury vapor light because they are worried about security. You can imagine what happened: They went down to the discount supply house and said something like "Give me the brightest, cheapest outdoor lighting fixture you have." And that's exactly what they got, paying "only" \$29.95 (maybe even less).

They brought it home and hung it up. Now it's splattering light everywhere, including onto your lawn and into your house through your windows. Their blinds are drawn of course, because they can't stand the glare either.

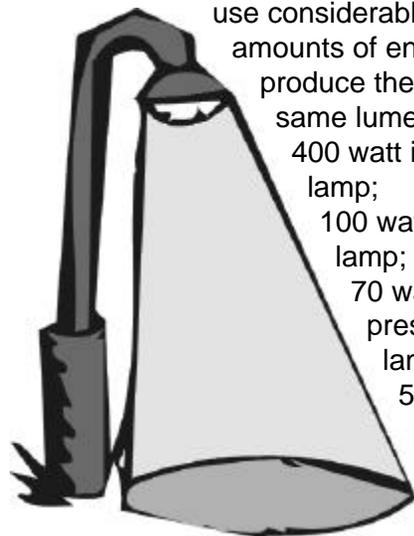
What did they get for \$29.95? A very bright light with very little light control and lots of glare. It creates light trespass, light pollution, and energy waste. Even though they probably now have a "feeling of security", their real security is probably no better than before.

Here are some ideas about what you can do: First and foremost, be tactful and understanding, don't argue. Do your homework first, be well prepared. Understand the essentials of the facts about energy savings given below, and about what makes a good security light. Know the local costs of electricity (cents per KWH). Is there is a local lighting control ordinance, and if so, what the details of it are, and what enforcement is being done, who is involved? Look around for available good security lighting fixtures and how much they cost. Facts are not enough, however. Personal relations are very important and emotions and perceptions are there all the time.

Specific Issues You Can Discuss With Your Neighbors

The Energy Issue, and Cost Savings:

When new, the 175 watt mercury vapor lamp puts out about 8000 lumens (a lumen is a measure of light output). The typical lumen output of a mercury vapor lamp after some years of use is about 7000 lumens. Compare mercury vapor light output to other lamps that



use considerably different amounts of energy to produce the about the same lumens of light:
400 watt incandescent lamp;
100 watt metal halide lamp;
70 watt high pressure sodium lamp;
55 watt low pressure sodium lamp (60% less electricity).

Real Safety vs. Perceived Safety: The 175 watt dusk-to-dawn security light may give the illusion of safety, because it's so bright, but it is really counterproductive to good vision. The criminal can hide in the glare or in the deep shadows around such poor lighting. (Look around near one. See the deep shadows next to the overlit areas? It is difficult for the eye to adapt to such sharp transitions in brightness.) Light used for security should illuminate what the owner is trying to see, rather than glaring in our eyes.

Suggestions for Good Lighting

Use a low wattage (18, or 35, or 55 watt) low pressure sodium (LPS) light in a fixture that shields glare. The fixture should direct the light output so that it goes only where its needed, not into a neighbor's yard or windows, or up into the sky. LPS provides lots of light (a good 35 watt LPS fixture will put out more useful light than the typical 175 watt dusk-to-dawn security light; even an 18 watt one will probably do a better job, at one tenth the energy cost). There should be no light trespass or sky glow produced. Well-designed LPS fixtures produce essentially no glare at all, so we are not blinded and can see into the dark. There are no dark, deep shadows for criminals to hide in. Visibility is the goal of night lighting, and quality LPS fixtures offer excellent visibility.

Use a spotlight fixture with an infrared sensor. The spotlight only comes on when the sensor sees movement. Any intruder will be scared off by the sudden light. You will be alerted by the light coming on, and your neighbors are more likely to notice, too. You can also buy fixtures which will sound an alarm inside the house. If you need the added security, what could be better? This type of fixture is a great security lighting system, and it provides effective, quality lighting.

Infrared sensor lights are widely available, in stores or by mail order. The cost ranges from about \$20 to over \$100, depending on the quality, features and source. They are easy to install: just mount them, plug them in, and adjust the sensitivity. Be sure that the fixture is mounted under the eaves so that there's no wasted light, and point the light beam where it's needed -- not into your neighbor's yard.