

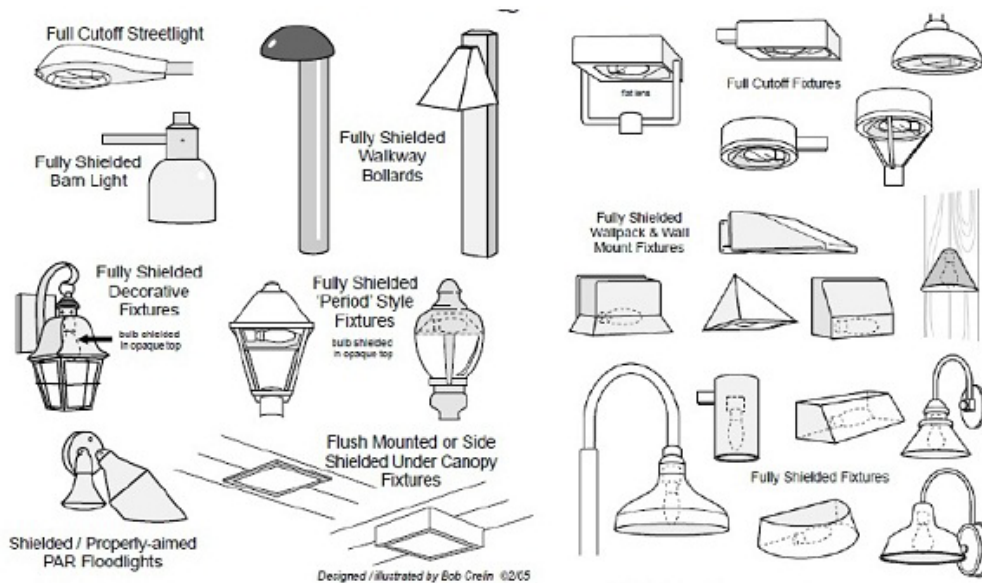


MEMORANDUM

Date: January 9, 2026
To: Mindy Brooks, Director
From: Smokey Padgett, Code Enforcement Officer
Subject: Exterior Lighting Code Enforcement

Prior to October 1, 2025, exterior lights were reviewed for compliance when development was proposed that required a Special Use Permit. Other new development, not requiring a Special Use Permit, was not required to meet the exterior light standards, including single family houses and outbuildings (e.g., barns). Ordinance 1367, adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on September 23, 2025, included amendments to Lewis County Code 17.142.020 adding the exterior light standards as part of the requirements for review of all new development. New exterior light fixtures installed after October 1, 2025, are required to meet the new standards, with certain exceptions such as Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) lighting. Lights installed prior to October 1, 2025, are vested under the old standards and property owners are not required to replace exterior light fixtures. Below are examples of exterior light fixtures that meet the new requirements, provided that movable fixtures are pointed downward.

Examples of Downward Pointing & Shielded Exterior Light Fixtures



Code enforcement in Lewis County is prioritized based on Lewis County Code 1.20.040:

1. The code violation presents an imminent threat to public health or safety;
2. The code violation impacts critical areas (e.g. rivers, wetlands, steep slopes);
3. The code violation consists of ongoing nonpermitted construction or failure to obtain permits for construction; or
4. The code violation does not comply with the conditions of approval for development and presents a threat to public health and safety or affects critical areas.

Exterior light violations do not fall into the priority list for enforcement. As stated in Lewis County Code 1.20.040 "violations that do not fit within the previous categories, and have minor public impacts, shall be investigated only when the county has sufficient resources to conduct enforcement and in the order received."

The protocol for enforcing the exterior light standards, outside of new development review, is that first the Code Enforcement Officer will determine if there are departmental resources available and if other high priority violations have been adequately addressed before responding to exterior light complaints. When the Code Enforcement Officer has resources available, they will review the documentation of a potential violation as provided by the complainant. If they can verify the violation, meaning the exterior light is required to meet the new standards after October 1, 2025, they will send a letter to the property owner informing them of options to come into compliance.

For moveable exterior lights, regardless of when they were installed, the Code Enforcement Officer will advise the owner that they need to direct the light downward to reduce or eliminate light from being directed at neighboring properties. If resources are available, effort will be made by the Code Enforcement Officer to work with owner of the moveable exterior light; however, it may not be possible to reduce all light spill without replacing the exterior light (see previous paragraphs about when replacing an exterior light can and cannot be required).

Please note, pointing a light downward or shielding a light does not mean the light is not visible from neighboring properties. It means the light is not "shining at" neighboring properties.

Approved: Mindy Brooks
Mindy Brooks, Director

01/09/2026
Date