FACT SHEET #lightpollution

Bright lights do not equate to greater safety.

Glare from unshielded lighting reduces safety.

Lighting up the nighttime environment does not necessarily increase safety and security. Effective lighting that helps people be safe —not just feel safe—is a win-win situation for everyone.

Busting the myth of bright lights and safety.

At home: Poor lighting can create a false sense of security.

Poorly designed outdoor lighting can backfire on safety. Bright and misdirected lights create shadows for criminals to hide, and some crimes, like vandalism, thrive in well-lit areas. Floodlights, for example, may highlight potential targets.

In town: Light for light's sake doesn't equal increased safety.

While towns, cities, and businesses aim to enhance safety with lighting, poorly aimed and inadequately shielded lights can attract criminals. A Chicago study identified a correlation between increased crime and overly bright alleyways.

On the road: bad lighting creates unsafe driving conditions.

Inadequate roadway lighting causes glare, contributing to accidents, especially affecting older individuals. A 2015 Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health study revealed that streetlights don't effectively prevent accidents or crime but they do cost a lot of money.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Make your home safer with smart lighting choices.

- **Use fully shielded, dark-sky friendly fixtures** so light shines where it's needed and does not create glare or extreme contrasts.
- **Only use lights when and where needed.** Install timers and dimmer switches, and turn off lights when not in use. If you must have security lighting, use motion sensors.
- **Use the right amount of light.** Too much light is wasteful and impairs vision.
- **Use long-wavelength lights with a red or yellow tint** to minimize negative health effects.
- **Work with your local government** to improve lighting conditions along roadways and shared spaces. Cities and towns can also restrict the use of bright signs and flashing lights near roadways.

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