

Sea Turtle Nesting Season – May 1 through October 31

This is just a general note to remind everyone to take care of lights along the beach as Turtle season starts soon. Here is some information and helpful links. If you have lights that can be seen from the beach, please review this information.

<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/sea-turtles/lighting/>

For millions of years female sea turtles have been coming ashore to lay their eggs on beaches. In the past the hatchling turtles were guided to the ocean by an instinct to travel away from the dark silhouettes of the dune vegetation and toward the brightest horizon which was the light from the sky reflecting off the ocean. In present times however, many coastal areas are highly populated. There are many artificial lights near the beach that can deter females from nesting and disorient hatchling sea turtles. The hatchlings travel inland, toward the artificial lights, where they often die from dehydration, are preyed upon by fire ants and ghost crabs, or sometimes crawl onto the road where they are run over by cars.

Solutions to Decrease Light Pollution Affecting Sea Turtles

There are ways that beach front property owners can modify their lights to prevent them from being seen from the beach. The following is a list of suggestions (these solutions may need to be used in conjunction with one another in order to prevent sea turtle disorientation).




Turn Off Unnecessary Lights





Don't use decorative lighting (such as runner lights or uplighting of vegetation) in areas that are visible from the beach. Permanently remove, disable, or turn off fixtures that cannot be modified in any other way.

For lights that can be repositioned, face them away from the beach so that the light source is no longer visible.

Shield the Light Source

Materials such as aluminum flashing can be used as a shield to direct light and keep it off the beach. When shielding lights, it is important to make sure they are shielded from all areas on the beach (including from either side and on top), and not just from the beach directly in front of the light. Black oven paint may be used as a temporary solution.

-  Light sockets with an exposed light source (such as plain bulbs) should be replaced with fixtures that are specially made to recess and/or the light source should be shielded.
-  Replace fixtures that scatter light in all directions (such as globe lights or carriage lights) with directional fixtures that point down and away from the beach.
-  Replace lights on poles with low profile, low-level lamps so that the light source and reflected light are not visible from the beach.

-  Replace incandescent, fluorescent, and high intensity lighting with the lowest wattage low-pressure sodium vapor lighting or replace white incandescent bulbs with the yellow "bug" light variety of 25 watts or less for incandescent and 9 watts or less for compact fluorescent. The best technology available for sea turtle friendly lighting is a Red or Amber LED.
-  Plant or improve vegetation buffers (such as sea grapes and other native beach vegetation) between the light source and the beach to screen light from the beach.
-  Use shielded motion detector lights for lighting, and set them on the shortest time setting.
-  To reduce spillover from indoor lighting move light fixtures away from windows, apply window tint to your windows that meets the 45% inside to outside transmittance standards for tinted glass (you'll save on air conditioning costs too!), or use window treatments (blinds, curtains) to shield interior lights from the beach.