

# QUICK GUIDE TO BLANCO'S 2018 OUTDOOR LIGHTING ORDINANCE



**PURPOSE:** To provide an easily understandable guide to the major provisions of the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance passed by the Blanco City Council that came into effect on October 9, 2018

**BOTTOM LINE FIRST:** In general, you can have whatever lights you want on your property as long as they meet two criteria:

1. The light cannot shine off your property onto another property or a city or state right-of-way to cause glare nor upward to pollute the night sky (they need to be pointed downward so they shine onto just your property; you can shield the lights or install fixtures that restrict the light to just your property, whichever you choose), and
2. The light must have a Correlated Color Temperature of not more than 3,000 degrees Kelvin (preferably 2,700 or lower).

**PURPOSE OF THE OUTDOOR LIGHTING ORDINANCE:** To protect the night sky from light pollution coming from lighting that shines upwards into the night sky; to reduce annoying and dangerous glare for drivers, pedestrians, and neighbors; to preserve the night sky for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, and to encourage the night sky-tourism industry in and around Blanco.

## WHERE CAN I FIND NIGHT SKY-FRIENDLY FIXTURES?



Buyer beware! Manufacturers will sometimes label a lighting fixture as a “Dark Sky” fixture when it actually isn’t. You have use your own judgement. If the fixture allows light to shine off property and above the horizon to pollute the night sky, it isn’t a “dark sky” fixture and it won’t comply with Blanco’s Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. If you



want to be safe, choose a fixture that has the seal of approval of the International Dark Sky Association. These can be found at [www.darksky.org/](http://www.darksky.org/). The Hill Country Alliance has a pretty good listing of fixtures found at big box stores; [http://www.hillcountryalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/DARK-SKY-FRIENDLY-FIXTURES-AVAILABLE-FROM-HOME-DEPOT\\_v3.pdf](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/DARK-SKY-FRIENDLY-FIXTURES-AVAILABLE-FROM-HOME-DEPOT_v3.pdf). Otherwise, hardware stores and online outlets have many, many dark sky fixtures to choose from. Just be careful that they really are what they claim to be!

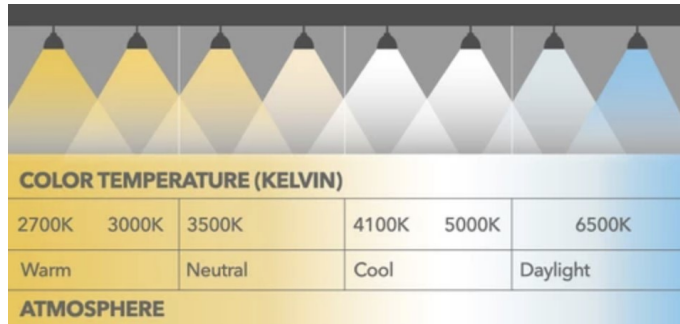
## WHAT IS “CORRELETED COLOR TEMPERATURE?”

It is now federal law that the packaging for all consumer bulbs must show information about the color temperature of the bulb. This is often labeled “Light Appearance” and ranges from “Warm” to “Cool.” An American Medical Association study warns that light with a Kelvin temperature above 3,000K inhibits the body’s ability to produce melatonin at night. Melatonin is a hormone that, among other things, helps the body ward off cancer. Hence, the City of Blanco requires that outdoor lights be no more than 3,000K as a public health issue.

Lighting Facts Per Bulb	
Brightness	800 lumens
Estimated Yearly Energy Cost	\$1.08
Based on 3hrs/day, 11g/kWh. Cost depends on rates and use.	
Life	22.8 years
Based on 3hrs/day	
Light Appearance	
Warm ————— Cool	
2700K	
Energy Used	9 watts

(over)

**HOW DOES CORRELATED COLOR TEMPERATURE AFFECT THE COLOR OF LIGHT?** Here is a chart showing how light gets bluer and bluer the higher you go in Color Temperature. It's the blue light that the American Medical Association wants us to minimize. Keep it warm and safe!



### **WHERE CAN I FIND BULBS WITH A COORELATED COLOR TEMPERATURE OF 3,000K or LESS?**

These bulbs come in all types and sizes. Some big box stores have them (though you sometimes have to hunt hard to find them). On-line shopping websites have them. The non-profit Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky ([www.blancocountynightssky.org](http://www.blancocountynightssky.org)) has a "Products" tab on its website that takes you directly to flat-bottomed LED bulbs with 2,700K temperature. (It also has some really inexpensive "motion detection" bulbs that only come on when there is movement in the area.)

### **WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT FLAT-BOTTOMED LEDS?**



It is simply that the light emitted by the bulb does not shine outwards in all directions to cause glare and pollute the night sky. The light only shines down. A great many existing fixtures in Blanco that do not meet the requirements of the 2018 Outdoor Lighting Ordinance, could come into compliance simply by changing the bulb out to a flat-bottomed LED with a Correlated Color Temperature of 3,000 Kelvin or less. And, because LEDs use much less electricity to produce the same amount of light as traditional incandescent bulbs, you'll save money on electricity...and they'll last longer!

### **WHERE CAN I READ THE COMPLETE 2018 OUTDOOR LIGHTING ORDINANCE?**

The ordinance is much more comprehensive than has been presented here so, if you are a builder, an electrician, or a contractor, it is best that you read the entire document to make sure your fixtures will be in compliance. You can look at the ordinance in person at City Hall or on the City's website

<https://www.cityofblanco.com/download/745/CHAPTER%205%20UDC%207.9.19%20APPROVED.pdf>.

An unofficial, reformatted version is also posted on the website of the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky <https://blancocountynightssky.org/blancolighting.php>



### **WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LIGHT POLLUTION AND NIGHT SKY PRESERVATION?**

Lots of useful information may be found by visiting the following websites: [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org); [www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org); [www.blancocountynightssky.org](http://www.blancocountynightssky.org).

# Better Lights for Better Nights

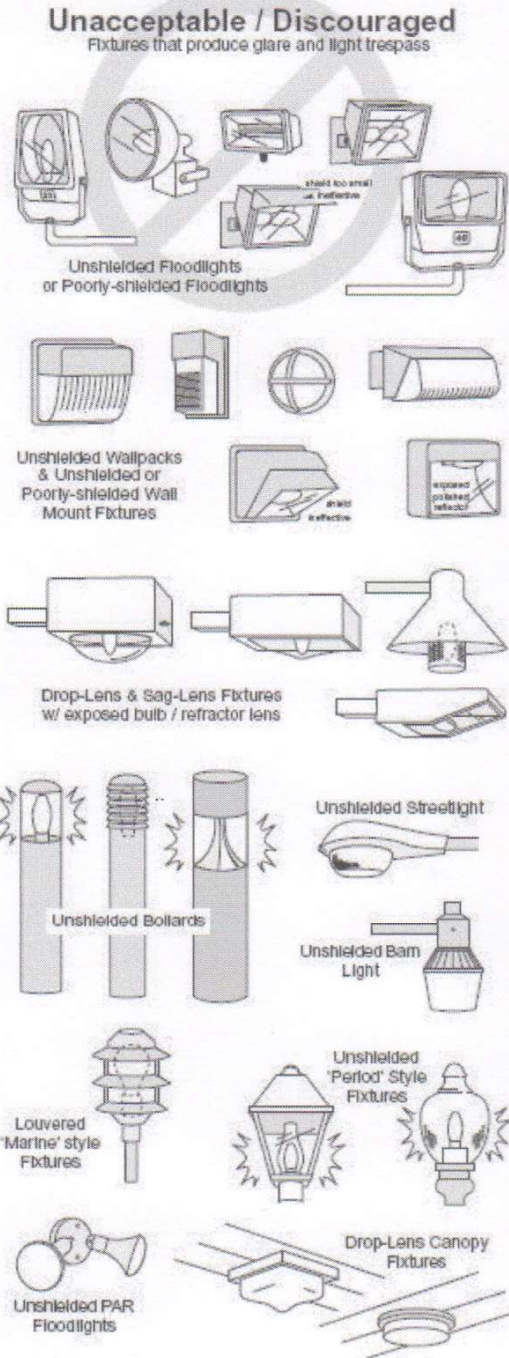


Diagram by Bob Crelin