

Air pollution: light emissions

Light emissions occur from an object that generates light such as home and security lights, spotlights, flood lights, advertising signs and entertainment events. While light does have many benefits it can negatively affect neighbours and if severe enough, can impact on people's health.

How to reduce light emissions

- Direct light downwards to illuminate the target area only.
- Use equipment such as shields and baffles to keep light spill to a minimum.
- Direct main light beams to below 70 degrees from horizontal to keep glare to a minimum.
- Position lights as far as practical from neighbouring properties, especially sensitive areas such as bedroom windows.

- Turn off lights when not in use and consider using sensor switches.
- Avoid placing a light near a reflective surface.
- Use existing features to hide the light source from view.
- Install only the required number of lights needed for an area (over lighting can cause light pollution and waste energy).

Complaints

If you are affected by light emissions it is important to first talk to the person responsible and try find a solution.

Refer to Council's 'Fix it at the Fence' fact sheet for some tips on how to resolve the issue directly.



If a suitable solution is not achieved, you can lodge a complaint with Bundaberg Regional Council.

How to lodge a complaint with Council

You will need to provide the following information:

- Your name, address and phone number (confidential)
- Type of light emission
- Source address
- Date and time light emission occurred
- The duration of each light emission
- Efforts you have made to resolve the issue with the responsible person

Top tip: Keep track of emission occurrences with a logbook to support your complaint.

How Council handles complaints

Council investigates most light emissions using the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

Sites with a development approval with specific conditions are investigated using the *Planning Act 2016*.

Council will consider:

- The amount of light being emitted.
- Any measures that have been taken or could reasonably have been taken by the person causing the emission.
- If nuisance lights have been angled or covered to reduce light spillage/trespass.
- The duration and rate of emission.
- The light's characteristics and qualities.
- The sensitivity of the environment and the impacts.
- The views of any other neighbours or complainants.
- Whether the site has a development approval with a condition specific to light emissions.

Possible outcomes of unlawful light emissions

Council may:

- Issue an on-the-spot fine of 15 penalty units (individual) or 75 penalty units (corporation).
- Issue a notice detailing the offence and timeframe where the responsible person must rectify the problem. If the person does not comply with the notice, an on-the-spot fine of 15 penalty units (individual) or 75 penalty units (corporation) may also be issued.
- Prosecute the responsible person.

If there is a development approval for the site with a condition about light emissions, Council may issue a notice to ensure compliance with the condition. If the person does not comply, a fine of 20 penalty units (individual) or 100 penalty units (corporation) may be issued.

Complaints not investigated by Council

Council shares responsibility for light complaints with the following authorities:

- Department of Transport and Main Roads – for light emissions from freeways and highways including on and off ramps
- Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) – for an environmentally relevant activity regulated by DESI (e.g. chemical manufacturing)
- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) – for an environmentally relevant activity regulated by DAF (e.g. poultry farming)
- Department of Environment, Science and Innovation – for a state or local government premises or activity.

Useful websites

- Department of Environment, Science and Innovation environment.desi.qld.gov.au
- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries daf.qld.gov.au
- Department of Transport and Main Roads tmr.qld.gov.au
- Standards Australia standards.org.au

Fix it at the fence

We're encouraging neighbours to fix it at the fence before referring disputes to Council.

Get tips on **how to resolve neighbourhood issues** here



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bundaberg.qld.gov.au