

# Keeping the Stars in the Skies In Mississippi Mills

## Light Pollution

In many towns across Canada, the night sky is being reduced to a gray glow. In the last two generations, light pollution has become a widespread issue affecting us all. Light pollution can be as distant as the yellowish dome of light above our town and as nearby as your neighbor's porch light.

There is a trend towards public areas being lit unnecessarily bright, through the use of higher wattage lamps. This trend, coupled with population growth and development accelerates the growth rate of light pollution. Light pollution shows up as "light domes" above our towns at night when viewed from afar, or a gray artificial sky glow when viewed from towns and cities. Without efforts to manage this trend, the Milky Way and the natural darkness of our night sky will disappear. Fortunately, our municipality now recognizes that the night sky is a precious and wondrous natural resource to be protected.

Something to think about:

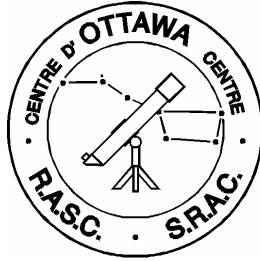
*We all use shades on indoor lamps to shield our eyes from glare. Why does the same rule not apply to outdoor lighting?*

For Further Information:

[www.ottawa.rasc.ca](http://www.ottawa.rasc.ca)

[www.mvc.on.ca](http://www.mvc.on.ca)

[www.mississippimills.ca](http://www.mississippimills.ca)



## Why Should I Be Concerned?

**Higher Energy Costs:** Excessive lighting or poorly aimed light wastes 30% of the light. Introducing higher wattage lamps for the same job equals higher energy costs. Light that illuminates the sky represents wasted costs.

**Health and Safety:** Excessive lighting is also a hazard to drivers and pedestrians. Excessive lighting can significantly reduce the night vision of drivers. Research supports that the constant flood of artificial light disturbs biological rhythms of animals and people.

**Our Local Observatory FLO -** Mississippi Mills is the home of the Fred Lossing Observatory (FLO) maintained and operated by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC). Located on the grounds of the Mill of Kintail, it was built by the scientific community with high-quality optics from the National Research Council. The local dark skies have permitted the *visual* discovery of five comets. This is a unique accomplishment

we are very proud of, considering that this is the only observatory in Canada to discover comets.

We are fortunate to have such an accomplished observatory in Mississippi Mills. With continuing programs such as public star nights, members are pleased to share the wonders of the heavens by providing views through telescopes. Some are inspired through these sessions to pursue astronomy in education, professionally, or as a wonderful hobby. Light polluted skies significantly detract from the first-time experience of looking to the heavens with a telescope.

## What Can I do to Reduce Light Pollution?

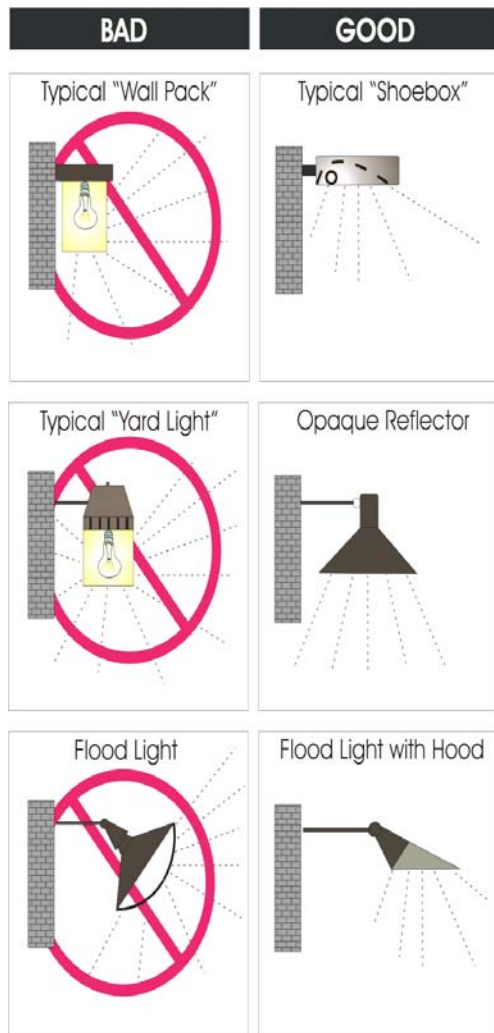
### **Use Only The Light Needed.**

Don't over-light, and don't spill light off your property. An infrared motion-sensor security light, which comes on only when someone steps into the beam, makes a lot of sense. It is only on when needed, thereby conserving energy. Its sudden illumination serves to frighten away the criminal. Put lights on timers. Put home security lights on a motion-detector switch, which turns them on only when someone enters the area; and choose low wattage lamps or bulbs.

**Choose Shielded Light Fixtures.** The diagrams on the reverse help to illustrate good and bad lighting options. Any light fixture where the bulb is exposed is bad.

**Aim Lights Down.** Direct light to the ground. Full-cutoff fixtures produce minimum glare. There is no glare because none of the light bulb is exposed and the shield forces the light down. This increases safety because you see illuminated people, cars, and terrain, not dazzling bulbs.

**Modify Existing Fixtures.** Installing a proper light shield or visor can provide the same effects as a full-cutoff fixture.



## Mississippi Mills Light Pollution By-law

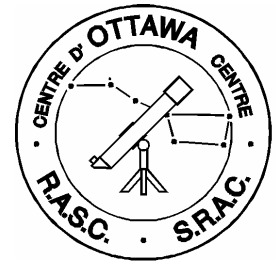
*WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Mississippi Mills deems it desirable to enact a by-law respecting the regulation and control of outdoor illumination, and control light trespass, as well as to ensure the continued astronomical importance of the Fred Lossing Observatory, located at the Mill of Kintail.*

*AND WHEREAS, properly designed light fixtures do not emit undesirable illuminating light rays up into the night sky and thus protect the nighttime environment;*

**NOW THEREFORE** the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Mississippi Mills ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

*The Outdoor Illumination By-Law for Mississippi Mills for the regulation and standards for responsible lighting, light pollution abatement, and the conservation of the night sky environment.*

“The new lighting (standards) will definitely improve safety”, remarked Mississippi Mills Councilor, Ed Wilson. “For example, if there is a bright light fixture in one area and another light that’s not as bright, your eyes adjust to the brighter light first. Because of that, the darker areas will appear even darker and your visibility is reduced. This new, uniform lighting will allow people to see far better...it will be much safer.”



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