

## Sea Turtle Lighting Compliance

During sea turtle season (May 1 to Oct. 31), lights illuminating the beach can disrupt nesting and hatching. Collier County's monitoring data has shown that adult sea turtles' nest more frequently



on dark beaches than lighted beach areas. Lights shining on the beach have also been found to cause hatchlings to disorient and crawl towards the light source, away from the Gulf. Disoriented hatchlings often end up in swimming pools, parking lots, and roads. Lost sea turtles are more likely to dehydrate or become depredated by raccoons, foxes, ghost crabs, ants, or birds

In accordance with the "Collier County Sea Turtle Protection Regulations" (Land Development Code Sec.3.10, 1994), the Collier County Environmental Services Department (CCESD) developed a program to minimize the damages caused by light pollution. The program moved over to Parks & Recreation in February of 2007.

The program is composed of an annual mail-out prior to season, night lighting compliance inspections, violation notices, and enforcement action. Prior to nesting season, a sea turtle information package is sent to beach front property owners, managers, and renters. The information package illustrates the importance of shielding or turning off lights during sea turtle nesting season and suggests inexpensive methods of reducing and minimizing beach lighting. Lighting compliance inspections are conducted by Parks & Recreation staff semimonthly throughout sea turtle nesting and hatching season. Light sources that create a visible shadow on the beach are considered a violation. When a light violation has been identified, efforts are made to work with the management to correct the problem. Any violations not corrected are turned over to Collier County's Code Enforcement Division for formal action.

### ***Help Us Reduce Sea Turtle Disorientations During Sea Turtle Season (May 1-October 31)***

- Outside lights that cannot be turned off for safety reasons can be temporarily shielded with foil or painted with black heat resistant oven paint on the beach-facing side.
- Lights that are able to be turned off should be off by 9 p.m.
- Low wattage yellow lights (preferably **low-pressure sodium vapor lights**) are less attractive to the turtles and are good replacements for white lights. (25-watt bug type)
- Closed blinds and curtains can shield bright interior lights that would normally shine on the beach.
- Shadow test your lights! If you can see your shadow while standing on the beach at night, the light is too bright.
- Inform your property manager if you notice lights that are too bright.

For information on light pollution check out the [International Dark Sky Association](#)

### **Lighting Ordinance:**

The state of Florida developed a model lighting ordinance ([62B-55, F.A.C.](#)) to guide local governments in creating lighting ordinances. The many counties and municipalities in Florida that have passed ordinances prohibiting light from reaching the beach can be found on the [Municipal Code Corporation](#) web site.

List of the Counties/Municipalities with these Ordinances

[Map of the Counties/Municipalities with these Ordinances](#) (1.7Mb)