
§ 250-15.1 Purpose.

This article is intended to permit adequate lighting and promote public safety by encouraging the use of outdoor artificial illuminating devices which do not have a detrimental effect on astronomical observations resulting from the emission of undesirable light rays into the night sky. All outdoor lighting installations shall conform to the provisions of this article and all other related codes of the City of Socorro, specifically the Uniform Building Code (UBC), as amended, and shall require permits and inspection.

§ 250-15.2 Approved materials and methods of installation.

A. The provisions of this article are not intended to prevent the use of any material or method of installation not specifically proscribed by this chapter, provided any such alternate has been approved.^[1]

[1] *Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).*

B. The Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcement Officer may approve any such alternate, provided he/she finds that the proposed design, material or method is:

- (1) Satisfactory and complies with the intent of this article; or
- (2) Provides approximate equivalence to those specific requirements of this article.

§ 250-15.3 Definitions.

As used in this article, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

EXEMPT ARTIFICIAL ILLUMINATING DEVICES

Outdoor light-emitting sources which, because of their permanent location, type, or size, are exempted in Table A below, or are listed as excluded in § 250-15.8, Permanent exemptions, shall be considered exempt from all requirements of Article XV.

INDIVIDUAL

Any private individual, tenant, lessee, owner, or any commercial entity, including, but not limited to: companies, partnerships, joint ventures or corporations.

INSTALLED

The initial installation of an outdoor light fixture, as defined herein, following the effective date of this article, but shall not apply to those outdoor light fixtures installed prior to this date. Any installation of outdoor lighting fixtures shall be subject to an electrical permit and/or a building permit and conform to the Uniform Building Code and/or the National Electric Code.

OUTDOOR LIGHT FIXTURES

Outdoor artificial illuminating devices, outdoor fixtures, lamps and other devices, permanent or portable, used for illumination or advertisement. Such devices shall include, but are not limited to, search, spot, or flood lights for:

- A. Buildings and structures.
- B. Recreational areas.
- C. Parking lot lighting.
- D. Landscape lighting.
- E. Billboards and other signage (advertising or other).
- F. Streetlighting.

§ 250-15.4 General requirements.

- A. Shielding. All exterior illuminating devices, except those exempt from this article, and those regulated by § 250-15.6, Prohibitions, shall be fully or partially shielded as required in Table A below.
- (1) "Fully shielded" shall mean that those fixtures shall be shielded in such a manner that light rays emitted by the fixture, either directly from the lamp or indirectly from the fixture, are projected below a horizontal plane running through the lowest point on the fixture where light is emitted.
 - (2) "Partially shielded" shall mean that those fixtures shall be mounted in such a manner that the uppermost edge of the shield is below the plane center line of the light source (lamp), minimizing light above the horizontal.
- B. Low-pressure sodium. Low-pressure sodium lamps with shielding are strongly recommended for general use within the City of Socorro.

Table A

Requirements for Shielding and Filtering

Fixture Lamp Type	Shielded	Filtered⁴
Low-pressure sodium ¹	Partially	None
High-pressure sodium	Fully	None
Metal halide ⁶	Fully	Yes
Fluorescent	Fully ⁵	Yes ²
Quartz ³	Fully	None
Incandescent (greater than 150 watts)	Fully	None
Mercury vapor	Fully	Yes
Fossil fuel	None	None
Glass tubes filled with neon, argon, krypton	None	None
Other sources	As approved by planning staff	

NOTES:

- ¹ The preferred light source to minimize undesirable light into the night sky affecting astronomical observations.
- ² Warm white and natural lamps are preferred to minimize adverse effects.
- ³ For the purposes of this article, quartz lamps shall not be considered an incandescent light source.
- ⁴ Most glass, acrylic, or translucent enclosures satisfy these filter requirements.
- ⁵ Outdoor advertising signs of the type constructed of translucent materials and wholly illuminated from within; do not require shielding.
- ⁶ Metal halide display lighting shall not be used for security lighting after 11:00 p.m. (or after closing hours if before 11:00 p.m.) unless fully shielded; metal halide lamps shall be in enclosed luminaries.

§ 250-15.5 Submission of plans and evidence of compliance.

- A. The applicant for a building permit involving outdoor artificial illuminating devices, outdoor fixtures, lamps and other devices shall submit (as part of the application for the permit) evidence of compliance with this article. The submission may contain but not be limited to the following:
- (1) Plans indicating location and type of illuminating devices, fixtures, lamps, other devices, etc.
 - (2) A description of the illuminating devices, outdoor fixtures, lamps and other devices. This description may include manufacturer's specifications, catalog descriptions, and drawings.

- B. The above indicated plans and description shall be complete enough to indicate to the plan examiner compliance with the requirements of this article.
- C. If devices, fixtures or lamps are submitted which are, by their nature or configuration, difficult to determine whether compliance exists, the applicant shall submit evidence of compliance by certified test reports as performed by a recognized testing lab.
- D. Should outside light fixtures or lamps be substituted after the permit has been issued, a change must be submitted to the local jurisdiction for approval, with adequate information to assure compliance with this article.

§ 250-15.6 Prohibitions.

- A. Searchlights. The operation of searchlights for advertising purposes within the City of Socorro is prohibited between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. the following morning.
- B. Recreational facility. No outdoor recreational facility (public or private) shall be illuminated by nonconforming means after 11:00 p.m. unless a specific recreational or sporting event or any other activity conducted at a ballpark, outdoor amphitheater, arena, or similar facility was in progress prior to 11:00 p.m.
- C. Outdoor building or landscaping illumination. The unshielded outdoor illumination of any building, landscaping, signage or other purpose is prohibited except with incandescent fixtures less than 150 watts.

§ 250-15.7 Temporary exemptions.

- A. Any individual, as defined herein, may submit a written request to the Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcement Officer, on a form prepared by the Planning Department, for a temporary exemption to the requirements of this chapter.
- B. Such exemption shall contain at least the following listed information:
 - (1) Specific exemption requested.
 - (2) Type and use of exterior light involved.
 - (3) Duration of time for requested exemption.
 - (4) Type of lamp and calculated lumens.
 - (5) Total wattage of lamp or lamps.
 - (6) Proposed location of exterior light.
 - (7) Previous temporary exemptions, if any.
 - (8) Physical size of exterior light and type of shielding provided.
- C. In addition to the above data, the Zoning Administrator/Code Enforcement Officer may request any additional information which would enable the City Council to make a reasonable evaluation of the request for temporary exemption.

§ 250-15.8 Permanent exemptions.

- A. Nonconformance. All outdoor light fixtures existing and fully installed prior to the effective date of this article may remain nonconforming indefinitely.
- B. Fossil fuel light, produced directly or indirectly by the combustion of natural gas or other utility-type fossil fuels.
- C. Federal and state facilities. Those facilities and lands owned, operated and protected by the United State federal government or the State of New Mexico are exempted by law from all requirements of this article. Voluntary compliance with the intent of this article at those facilities is encouraged.

§ 250-15.9 **Conflict with other codes.**

Where any provision of any of the New Mexico State Statutes, or any federal law, or any companion ordinance within the City of Socorro comparatively conflicts with the requirements of this article, the most restrictive shall govern.