

Save energy outside, too!

Your outdoor lighting can be energy efficient and look aesthetically pleasing.

With the end of daylight saving time around the corner, it's worth re-evaluating your lighting needs. As the days get shorter, your lights will be on longer — meaning the more efficient your lights are, the more energy and money you'll save.

This is particularly true for [outdoor lights](#). Since many people choose incandescent outdoor lights that are higher in wattage than indoor lights, the cost to operate exterior lights can be significant, particularly if they use multiple bulbs.

There are three things that you should consider for the most efficient outdoor lighting: design, selection and control

Design

Pointed in the right direction, efficient lights can [serve a variety of needs](#), including aesthetics, safety and security. If you use covers, reflectors or deflectors to direct light to where it's needed most, you won't have to flood an area with light to achieve the intended purpose.

Well-designed, low-wattage varieties also help reduce light pollution and minimize disturbance to neighbours. For example, efficient walkway lights with low-mounted fixtures spread light downward and are very useful for navigating dark paths, steps and driveways.

Selection

From an energy-savings perspective, it is best to avoid incandescent bulbs. Instead, consider more energy-efficient options.

High intensity discharge (HID) lights, such as metal halide or high-pressure sodium lights offer the best bang for your buck. According to [BC Hydro](#), high-pressure sodium lights use 70 per cent less energy than standard incandescent floodlights and last up to 10 times longer. Since they take a while to warm up, HID lights are best suited for area lighting, rather than for applications where

they may be switched on and off frequently. Though they are effective at low temperatures, they require a specific fixture.

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are highly efficient, but make sure you purchase ones designed specifically for outdoor use. If you live in a colder climate, check the temperature rating. Many CFLs won't operate well in temperatures below zero.

Light-emitting diodes (LEDs) are long lasting, highly efficient and well suited for directional and utility lighting, such as for walkways, stairways and landscape illumination.

Solar lighting won't even show up on your electricity bill. **Solar lights** use solar cells that convert sunlight into electricity with batteries that store energy during the day for use at night. Solar lights are easy to install, virtually maintenance free and use free energy from the sun. Before making this purchase, make sure that replacement batteries and bulbs are available — not all varieties are replaceable.

Control

Even with efficient bulbs, [controlling](#) the amount of time your lights are on can save energy and money. Consider automating outdoor lights with timers and sensors so they're only on when you need them, and adjusting the brightness with dimmers.

Photosensors or photocells sense ambient light levels and automatically turn lights on in low light and off during the day. Motion sensors turn lights on automatically when they detect movement, turning off after a set period of time. Timers allow you to pre-set on and off times; look for digital timers with programming flexibility, manual override and power disconnect.

Timers are particularly useful for controlling decorative lights. If utility and security lighting is needed, consider a combination of a motion sensor and photosensor. Where outdoor lights are only needed for a portion of the night, use a [combination](#) of photocells and a timer.

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