

CCCL PROJECT GUIDELINES TO REDUCE IMPACTS TO MARINE TURTLES

SECTION 161.053(5)(C) FLORIDA STATUTE. The department may condition the nature, timing, and sequence of construction of permitted activities to provide protection to nesting sea turtles and hatchlings and their habitat, pursuant to §370.12, and to native self-resistant vegetation and endangered plant communities.

SECTION 370.12(3)(D) FLORIDA STATUTE. Any application for a department permit or other type of approval for an activity that affects marine turtles or their nests or habitat shall be subject to conditions and requirements for marine turtle protection as part of the permitting or approval process.

CONSTRUCTION TIMING

Construction or repair of any structure on the sea turtle nesting beach (e.g., dune walkover, seawalls or other revetments, sandbags, groins or jetties, piers, etc.) or any other activity requiring beach disturbance (e.g., placing fill, dune revegetation, excavation, etc.) is strongly discouraged during the main portion of the nesting season, May 1 to October 31 (in areas of known leatherback nesting, special conditions may be imposed beginning March 1). Proposals to conduct such activities during the nesting season will require extended review and are unlikely to be approved unless emergency circumstances are demonstrated. These proposals may also require the applicant to contract the services of an entity possessing a special marine turtle permit to perform work involving marine turtles. Projects which result in permanent modification of nesting habitat may require the evaluation of long-term (multi-year) impacts on nesting activity.

Please Remember: Any construction activity that disrupts a nesting marine turtle, disrupts or destroys a sea turtle nest, or results in the injury or mortality of a marine turtle may subject the applicant to prosecution under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and Florida Statutes.

LIGHTING

General Information

The negative effects of beachfront lighting on marine turtle hatchlings and nesting females are well documented. Hatchlings emerge during hours of darkness, allowing them to make their journey to the sea when sand temperatures are low and terrestrial, avian, and aquatic predators comparatively few. Proper hatchling orientation depends largely on a visual response to light. Under natural conditions, the ocean presents the brightest and most open horizon, and this serves as a cue to hatchlings in their ocean-finding behavior. Artificial lights disrupt this behavior and attract hatchlings as they emerge from their nests. Visible light sources and the reflection or "glow" resulting from the cumulative effects of coastal lights both contribute to this problem. Instead of making their way to the ocean, hatchlings become misoriented and may wander extensively on the beach. Even for those hatchlings that eventually reach the ocean, unnecessary wandering increases their vulnerability to predation and expends limited energy stores. In addition, hatchlings may wander landward through beachfront property or across parking lots and highways toward light sources. Most die from desiccation, direct exposure to the morning sun, or contact with vehicles. Furthermore, beachfront lighting has been documented to negatively affect nesting females and often results in reduced or abnormal nesting activity.

CCCL PROJECT GUIDELINES TO REDUCE IMPACTS TO MARINE TURTLES *(page 2)*

General Guidelines

To prevent hatchling misorientation and adverse impacts to nesting turtles, installation of exterior lighting is strongly discouraged. If exterior lighting is proposed, the following general guidelines shall be followed. Adherence to these guidelines will help in developing an acceptable lighting plan. However, in some cases, specific site conditions may warrant more stringent lighting restrictions.

1. Lights should not be placed on the seaward side of the subject property or in any location visible from the nesting beach.
2. Lights positioned seaward of the landward toe of the dune (or its equivalent) are prohibited.
3. The light source or any reflective surface of the light fixture must not be visible from any point on the nesting beach. Illumination of any area of the nesting beach, either through direct illumination, reflective illumination, or cumulative illumination is prohibited.
4. Completely shielded downlights without interior reflective surfaces are preferred. All proposed fixtures shall be appropriately shielded, louvered, and/or recessed.
5. Fixtures shall be low mounted through the use of low bollards, ground level fixtures, or low wall mounts.
6. Lights proposed for the seaward side of the subject property must incorporate either shielded low pressure sodium lamps or low wattage (i.e., 50W or less) "bug" type bulbs. Exceptions may be granted for extremely low wattage bulbs (e.g., 5W).
7. Lights for purely decorative or accent purposes shall not be used on the seaward side of the subject property and, if proposed for the landward side, shall be limited in number and intensity. The use of uplights is strongly discouraged and in most cases, cannot be approved.
8. High intensity lighting, such as that proposed for roadways, shall utilize shielded low pressure sodium lamps. The number of fixtures shall be kept to a minimum and shall be positioned and mounted in a manner such that the point source of light or any reflective surface of the fixture is not visible from any point on the nesting beach. Light emanating from these fixtures may not directly or indirectly illuminate the nesting beach.
9. Only low intensity lighting shall be utilized in parking areas that are visible from any point on the nesting beach. This lighting shall be set on a base which raises the source of light no higher than 48" off the ground, and shall be positioned and shielded such that the point source of light or any reflective surface of the light fixture is not visible from any point on the nesting beach. The light emanating from such fixtures may not directly or indirectly illuminate the nesting beach.
10. Parking lots and roadways, including any paved or unpaved area upon which motorized vehicles will operate, should be designed or positioned such that vehicular headlights do not cast light toward or onto the nesting beach. Hedges, native dune vegetation, and/or other ground-level barriers should be utilized to meet this objective.
11. During construction, temporary security lighting during the main portion of the sea turtle nesting season (May 1 - October 31) is strongly discouraged. If absolutely necessary, these lights shall be limited to the fewest number necessary. Security lights shall be completely shielded and low-mounted. Low pressure sodium vapor lamps or low wattage yellow "bug" type bulbs shall be utilized. Under no circumstances shall these lights directly or indirectly illuminate any area of the nesting beach.
12. Tinted glass or window film that meets a transmittance value of 45% or less (inside to outside transmittance) shall be utilized on all windows and glass doors visible from any point on the nesting beach.