

BIG ROCK NEWS

A publication of Big Rock Mesas Property Owners Association

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Home/Fire Insurance Discounts for Big Rock



Looking for a discount on your home fire insurance? Our Big Rock Mesas area has been awarded the status of Firewise Community by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), acting on behalf of its sponsors the USDA Forest Service, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the National Association of State Foresters. This status is earned by a community in any given year when it meets a set of criteria for having acted to mitigate risks from wildfires. [Firewise-USA](#)

The Firewise status for Big Rock can earn you a discount of anywhere from 5-10% on fire insurance from many of the major insurers, including California Fair Plan as well as many other players. Check with your insurance agent to make sure you get the discount. You can share the BRMPOA Firewise Certificate with the agent and insurer. The certificate for this year is reproduced on the next page.

Thanks so much to our recent BRMPOA Treasurer, **Stu Walter**, for the hard work and dedication in working with NFPA to get our Big Rock Mesas community our Firewise Status – and to giving us all the option save money!

BRMPOA Information

Board Meetings are held on the 2ND Wednesday of every month at 7 PM. Meetings are open to all residents and property owners, and are currently held by Zoom, with a link announced each month, and minutes sent to members by email.

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Crime Prevention:

Lock Up and Back Up



You may have seen the post on NextDoor on June 18 by Beverly Taki from Corral Canyon about protecting your home from burglary. She reported that in the middle of the night “someone intentionally came on my property and turned the main electrical meter OFF, making the entire home without power.” Several other persons commented on her post to say that this had happened to them in other neighborhoods -- thieves had then entered the property and stolen things while electrical power to security cameras and communication devices was turned off. One of those other commenters who had experienced an incident of this type was from our own upper Big Rock. Ms. Taki recommended adding a combination **padlock to the electrical box** into your home. Andrea M. from the customer support team at Southern California Edison reported in a phone call on June 21 that there was no prohibition against owners putting locks on their electrical boxes.

Another alternative? **Backup power.** Posts on the online community site Reddit about similar crimes nationwide, as well as common sense logic, also suggest having a backup power system of some type (e.g., a generator) that turns on immediately once main power is lost to the home. An additional advantage of the backup power system is that it can be used in other situations, such as hazard-instigated power outages (e.g., trees falling on electrical lines) as well as planned Public Safety Power Outages by SCE in times of high fire risk in Big Rock.



The By-Laws Poll is Still Open!



THANK YOU to all in our community who have responded to the request to vote on the new bylaws. As of June 25, 100 of our 168 members have cast their votes (a much better voting turnout than we usually get it most governmental elections!), and their time and effort is very much appreciated. The vote closes on July 31. If you have not voted yet but can't find the ballot that our Secretary, Frank Albino, sent you by email or snail mail with the request to reply YES or NO to the revised by-laws, you can contact Frank at falbinoesq@outlook.com.



Stepping Up: The Big Rock Community Needs YOUR Participation!

The BRMPOA board recently approved an expansion to **nine members** in an effort to offer more opportunities for **people in our community to be involved** and to contribute to our efforts to improve our own lives and times in Big Rock. Perhaps you have some **ideas** of things the board should be doing? Or maybe you just want to **give back** to our community? Or perhaps you would like to be more aware of **what is going on** in Big Rock? Everyone's lives are busy and a board position doesn't have to add piles more things to your plate, but we do need voices from the community in order to best represent all of our interests.

In August there will be a solicitation of candidates for five board positions (4 positions are not up for re-election this year), and we sincerely hope you will agree to run. For the election, all BRM **members in good standing** (property owners who paid their Association dues in full for the Association's fiscal year ending on July 31, 2023) will be sent a ballot with the name and picture of each candidate, and a paragraph written by the candidate about who they are and whatever they think voters should hear on their behalf. Candidates must be BRM members in good standing. Voters will be asked to select 5 of the candidates to serve for a term of two years. Official meetings take place once per month and are open to all members. Please feel free to **contact any member of the board** at their email shown on page 1 if you want more information or have any questions at all.

Whether you like what the board has done or would prefer a different agenda, this is the chance for you to step up and **help to make good things happen**. Between now and August, think about it and talk to your neighbors – and we hope you will agree to be on the ballot or encourage another member to do so.

FYI, here are a few comments from currently elected board members about their service on the board:



Frank Albino

I have been on the BRMPOA Board for several years and have found it very satisfying and rewarding to be able to contribute my abilities and talents to the Board's important work that greatly benefits the BRM community that we all love. I was recently able to use my training as an attorney to help the Board design and adopt updated bylaws for the Association.



Terry Davis

I have been on the POA board for 8 years and have been honored to be president for the last 5 years. I have always been involved in my community wherever I have lived, both for my family's sake as well as for the betterment of the entire community. I haven't always known what I might bring to the table but I do know that I am someone who doesn't shy away from getting my hands dirty – figuratively and literally! And each community has different gifts, needs, challenges and opportunities. There are lots of ways to get involved. And small gestures can have big impacts! Sometimes we know what our skills are and sometimes we find them by just being willing to step up.



Janet Fulk

I offered to run for election two years ago because I thought my grant-writing experience might be of some use to the community. I have learned so much about Big Rock and I have been educated and involved in other board initiatives that were quite eye-opening to me – way beyond grant writing – and I feel so much more closely tied to our community than I ever have since I moved here in 1989.



Jeff Grier

I have been a resident of the Big Rock community since 2013 and a member of the Big Rock board for three years. During my time on the board, I have worked on securing backup generation for the community's water system and have also worked on the dewatering committee. I enjoy helping any way I can in preserving and protecting this beautiful place in which we all live.



FEATURE: Malibu's Dark Sky Ordinance

By Terry Davis

Change is difficult. At least for me! So, I sought some words of wisdom from folks a lot wiser than I!

For example...

- "Change before you have to." Jack Welch
- "A wise man changes his mind, a fool never will." Icelandic Proverb
- "All things are difficult before they are easy." Thomas Fuller

Or on another tack...

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder where you are.

Looking up is no solution:

The sky's so full of light pollution. ~ David H. Levy, astronomer, c. 2013

Malibu is taking a big environmental step in instituting the Dark Sky Ordinance. We can appreciate it as we see it imposed on commercial lighting like gas stations. But as it hits "home" and addresses residential lighting and speaks to the effects of over-lighting and unnecessary lighting, it begins to give us pause. I, myself, resisted as my husband went about our newly renovated home and made all the changes within the new codes. We were fortunate that many of our luminaire (light fixture) choices in wall sconces, for example, were downlights and within the code but turning off even our "low light" tree uplights elicited a small tantrum from me. Now? I appreciate the added tranquility.

Below is a bit of explanation as well as some (hopefully) easy actions you might take to step into compliance. And, if you want to just jump in, be my guest!

Purpose

- To preserve Malibu's rural character and quality of life, and to protect wildlife and habitats from light pollution. (Light pollution affects the night sky up to 150 miles from the source. Over one million migratory birds die to the confusion of light and they circle and circle until exhausted, and then they fall to their death. This is just one species affected by light.)
- To preserve enjoyment of the night-time sky and promote the City's goal of conserving energy and natural resources.

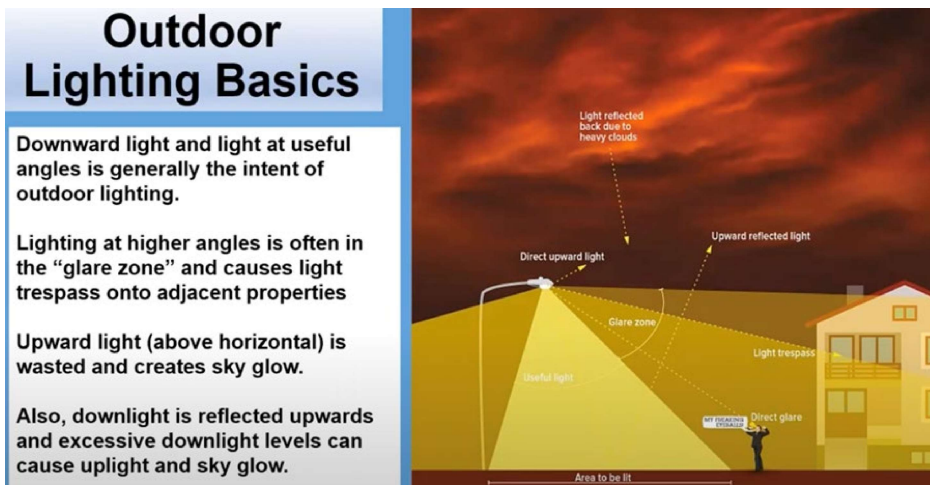
We can start by making some easy changes and adjustments both to our way of thinking and to our use of lighting. Below are some simple explanations and some easily doable suggestions. We can take a step at a time!

#1. Don't overlight!

Lighting Basics: (Picture 1)

1. Downward light is generally the intent of outdoor lighting. (e.g. street lights)
2. Lighting at higher heights & angles is often in the "glare zone" and causes light trespass onto adjacent properties. And - Glare does *not* increase the available or useful light it just causes glare!
3. Upward light (above horizontal) is wasted (in terms of creating better visibility) and creates sky glow.
4. *Excessive* downlight levels can cause uplight (by reflection) and sky glow.

Picture 1:



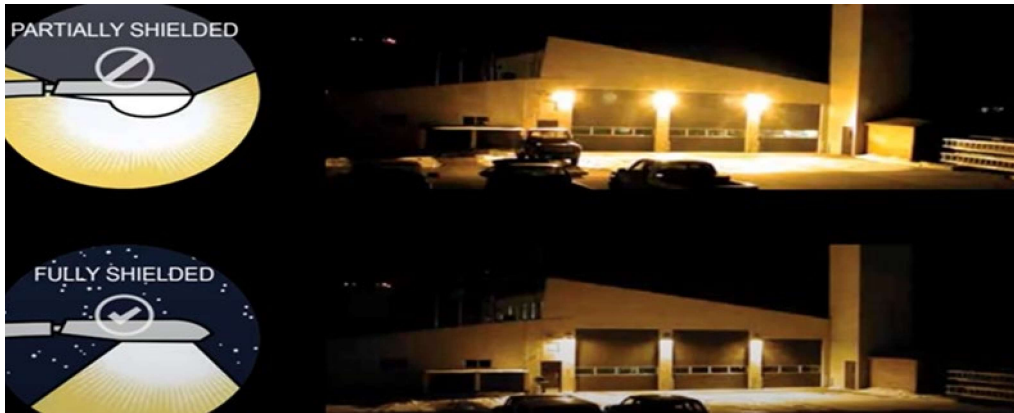
Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting:

1. All lighting should have a clear purpose
2. Light should be directed only where needed
3. Light should be no brighter than necessary
4. Light should be on only when it is useful
5. Use warmer colored lights where possible

Some possible **immediate actions**: Turn off all outdoor lighting by 11:00 pm (or when people are no longer in area – whichever is later) except for motion sensor lights.

1. Regulate Motion Sensor lights to turn off 10 minutes after activation. Also mount the lights so they shoot downward.*
2. Aim for "Fully Shielded" outdoor light fixtures – (picture 2) Replace bulbs with "**Warm**" lighting (Warm lights have lower color temperatures, and therefore appear more yellow, while cool lights have higher color temperatures, and appear whiter or bluer. Warm white ranges from 2200K to about 3000K, while cool white is a round 4000K)
3. When replacing use LEDs (LED stands for **light emitting diode**. LED lighting products produce light up to 90% more efficiently than incandescent light bulbs)
4. Although outdoor lantern fixtures will no longer be approved, for now we can soften the glare with theatrical light gels and be sure to turn off by 11 pm.

Picture 2



5. String lights may be used in outdoor areas **when people are present** and turned off by 11 pm. (holiday lights are an exception!).
6. Turn off your tree uplights as well as the string crawl lights on tree trunks and limbs. Yup, they are verboten. Just do it! You will be surprised at how you get used to it. Maybe...we can save both for special occasions. **BUT DO TURN OFF BY 11PM!**
7. Roof skylights – be aware of the light leakage and refrain from installing light units within the skylights – as that light goes directly skyward.

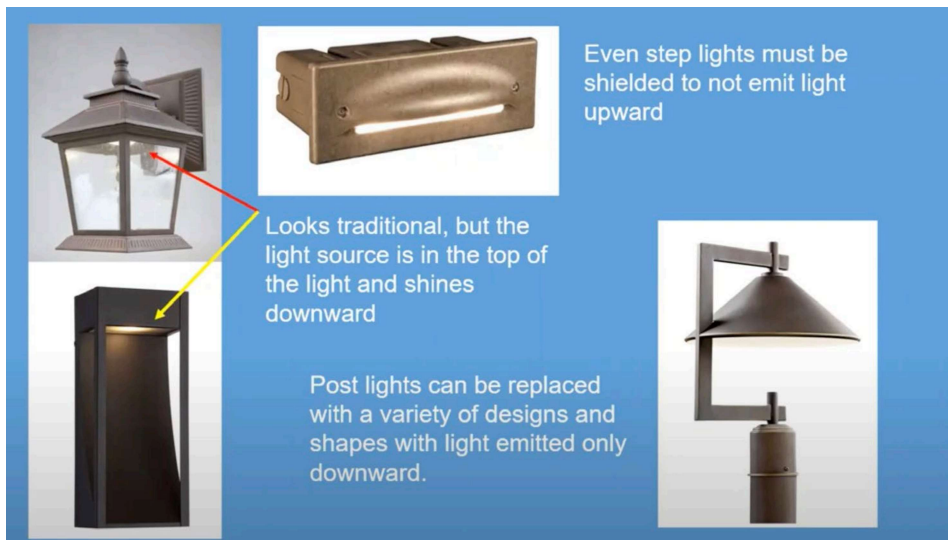
*Law enforcement supports the idea that less “all night” outer lighting and the use of motion sensor lighting is a greater deterrence against break-ins. There is no clear scientific evidence that increased outdoor lighting deters crimes. It may make us feel safer, but has not been shown to make us safer (e.g., darksky.org/light-pollution/lighting-for-citizens/lighting-crime-and-safety)

International Dark Sky Organization - works to protect the night skies for present and future generations. darksky.org

Finding Proper Lighting: (picture 3)

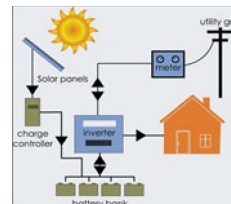
- darksky.org/our-work/lighting/lighting-for-citizens/residentialbusiness-lighting/ **This is an easy, informative, supportive website of the International Dark-Sky Assoc. It addresses some important concerns – including safety, a guide to assess your own lighting & where to shop!**
- darksky.org/our-work/lighting/lighting-for-industry/fsa/fsa-products/#!/Residential/c/12499367/offset=0&sort=nameAsc **This website shows 100s of approved lighting fixtures with links to manufacturers.**
- lampsplus.com A "dark sky" search returned 252 results, and almost all are dark sky compliant with the Ordinance.
- destinationlighting.com A "dark sky" search returned 1053 results, and almost all are dark sky compliant with the Ordinance.

Picture 3:



Help make Malibu one of the most distinctive communities in the country.

Solar Energy System Fire Awareness



Recent media stories have focused on the potential **fire risks** that need to be controlled when installing **Solar Energy Storage Systems** (ESS). The ESS designation refers to a variety of systems that rely on batteries to store renewable energy for future use (e.g., powerwalls and related battery storage technologies). The flammability issue has drawn attention from such diverse sources as insurers (e.g., chubb.com on ESS risks), technology specialists (e.g., techcrunch.com on Tesla battery fire), and fire prevention agencies (e.g., nfpa.org on ESS safety). These articles as well as other reliable sites on the web inform us on how to be both energy-saving and fire safe in our community. The bottom line is that consumers need to be aware of issues related to proper installation, location of the systems, spacing between units, and fire protection guards for the systems themselves. Thanks to local Big Rock resident **Paul Boulet** for bringing this issue to our attention.