

Night Work and Lighting

About 8 minutes to deliver

Foot-candle minimums, the glare that blinds a driver, and the fact that everybody is more tired than they think.

Night work concentrates several hazards at once: less light, more fatigue, drivers who are less alert, and a crew that is doing an unfamiliar version of a familiar job.

THERE IS A NUMBER

1926.56 requires construction areas, ramps, runways, corridors, offices, shops and storage areas to be lit to at least the minimum intensities in Table D-3 while work is in progress — starting at 5 foot-candles for general construction area lighting, with higher minimums for shops, plants and specific operations.

That is a measurable requirement, not a judgement. A light meter costs very little, and "it looks alright" is not the standard.

GETTING THE LIGHT RIGHT

- Light the task, not the area. Ceiling-height flood on a general area still leaves a shadow exactly where someone's hands are.
- Kill the glare. A light aimed at head height blinds everyone facing it and makes the darkness beyond it worse. Aim down, and shield toward traffic.
- Watch what glare does to drivers. In a work zone, a badly aimed tower is a hazard to the public and to the crew — a driver who cannot see is heading toward you.
- Mind the transitions. Eyes take minutes to adjust going from a bright zone into a dark one, and that gap is when people trip, step into a hole or walk into a machine.
- Light the walking routes, the stairs and the edges, not just where the work is.

BEING SEEN

- Class 3 high-visibility at night, not Class 2. Retroreflective, and clean — a vest grey with dust reflects almost nothing.
- Lights on every machine, working, and checked before the shift rather than during it.
- Assume drivers cannot see you until proven otherwise, and remember that a headlamp shining at a driver is not the same as being visible.

THE CREW

- Fatigue is worst between about 2am and 6am, regardless of how much sleep anybody had. Rotate the demanding tasks, take the breaks, and keep an eye on each other.
- The first night of a rotation is the hardest, and the drive home afterwards is the most dangerous part of the whole shift.
- Fewer people around. If something happens, the response is slower, so the plan for calling for help and for meeting the ambulance matters more, not less.

SET UP IN DAYLIGHT WHERE YOU CAN

Walking the site while you can see it — the holes, the edges, the routes, the cords — is worth an hour.

ASK THE CREW

- Is the work area actually lit to the minimum, and has anyone measured it?
- Where is a light shining into somebody's eyes — ours or a driver's?
- Who is on their first night, and how long is their drive home?

29 CFR 1926.56 · 29 CFR 1926.201 · 29 CFR 1926.28

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

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Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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