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Hutchinson Island, FL 34949-8842

February 2, 2026

NOTICE OF SEA TURTLE-FRIENDLY LIGHTING



RE: 2026 Sea Turtle Nesting Season

Dear Property Owner Association / Owner:

It is that time of year again—sea turtle nesting season starts on March 1st. We are notifying residents with beachfront properties on Hutchinson Island of the dangers of artificial lighting to sea turtles and request compliance to address any lighting issues.

Every year, several endangered sea turtle species utilize our local beaches for nesting and hatching baby sea turtles called hatchlings. Light sources from your windows, parking lots, streetlights, light from cars, campfires, etc., can lead hatchlings and adult turtles in the wrong direction, also known as disorientation. Disorientation can result in death from exposure or predation.

For your convenience, please see the enclosure on "Sea Turtle-Friendly Lighting Solutions" for recommendations on making your property compliant with the County's sea turtle protection standards and a guide on Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Approved Sea Turtle Lighting.

**Please inspect your property to make sure it is compliant with the attached Sea Turtle-Friendly Lighting regulations before March 1, 2026, sea turtle nesting season.**

St. Lucie County will perform a nighttime inspection of all beachfront property from late March through July 2026. If a violation is found on your property, it may result in a public hearing before the County's Code Enforcement Special Magistrate.

The St. Lucie County Building & Code Regulation office provides sea turtle nesting educational brochures and flyers to help residents learn about sea turtle-friendly beaches. For more information, please contact Melissa Brubaker, Permitting & Code Administrative Manager at (772) 462-1558 or [Melissa.Brubaker@stlucieco.gov](mailto:Melissa.Brubaker@stlucieco.gov)

St. Lucie County looks forward to your continued cooperation to protect and ensure the survival of our areas sea turtles.

Sincerely,

Melissa Brubaker, Permitting & Code Administrative Manager

Melissa Brubaker | Planning and Development Services | Code and Permitting Administrative Manager

✉ [Melissa.Brubaker@stlucieco.gov](mailto:Melissa.Brubaker@stlucieco.gov)

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## **Helpful Solutions to Decrease Light-Pollution Affecting Sea Turtles**



(Information provided by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission)

Below are suggestions to help beachfront property owners modify their lights to prevent them from being seen from the beach to prevent sea turtle disorientation.

1. Turn off unnecessary lights.
2. Turn off lights visible on nesting beaches or use special fixtures to shield the lights from the beach.
3. Existing artificial light sources shall be repositioned, modified, or replaced with modern alternatives so that the light source is not directly visible from the beach and/or does not directly illuminate areas seaward the primary dune.
4. Don't use decorative lighting (such as runner lights or up lighting of vegetation) in areas visible from the beach, and permanently remove, disable, or turn off fixtures that cannot be modified in any other way.
5. For lights that can be repositioned, face them away from the beach so that the light source is no longer visible.
6. Shield the light source. Materials such as aluminum flashing can be used as a shield to direct light and keep it off the beach. When shielding lights, it is important to ensure they are shielded from all areas on the beach (including from either side and on top), not just from the beach directly in front of the light. Black oven paint may be used as a temporary solution.
7. Light sockets with an exposed light source (such as plain bulbs) should be replaced with fixtures specially made to recess, and the light source should be shielded.
8. Replace lights on poles with a low-profile, low-level lamp so that the light source and reflected light are not visible from the beach.
9. Replace fixtures that scatter light in all directions (such as globe or carriage lights) with directional fixtures that point down and away from the beach.
10. Replace incandescent, fluorescent, and high-intensity lighting with the lowest wattage low-pressure sodium vapor lighting or replace white incandescent bulbs with the yellow "bug" light variety of 25 watts or less for incandescent and 9 watts or less for compact fluorescent. A Red or Amber LED is the best technology available for sea turtle-friendly lighting.
11. Plant or improve vegetation buffers (such as sea grapes and other native beach vegetation) between the light source and the beach to screen light from the beach.
12. Reduction of Indirect Lighting on the Beach: Installing ground-level barriers is encouraged to reduce the amount of indirect lighting striking the beach-dune system.
13. Lighting in Pedestrian Pathways: Lights illuminating beach access points, due crossovers, beach walkways, piers, or any other structure seaward of the primary dune designed for pedestrian traffic shall be shielded such that they are not directly visible from the beach.
14. Use shielded motion detector lights for lighting and set them on the shortest time setting.
15. Replace fixtures that scatter light in all directions (such as the globe).
16. To reduce spillover from indoor lighting, move light fixtures away from windows, apply window tint to your windows that meet the 45% inside to outside transmittance standards for tinted glass, or use window treatments (blinds, curtains) to shield interior lights from the beach. Blackout draperies or shade screens are preferred.
17. Please call local law enforcement 911 non-emergency if disoriented hatchlings are found away from the sea.