

# BUREAU OF STREET LIGHTING

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why doesn't my street have streetlights?

Until the mid-1950's, the City did not require developers of housing, commercial and industrial property to install street lighting. So in the older areas of the City, most streets do not have streetlights, unless the developer voluntarily installed them, or a neighborhood group or their Council Office started a project to install them at the property owner's expense.

Only those who have street lighting pay for it. Maintenance costs are assessed annually. This is not paid for from the basic property taxes or other taxes. New assessments require a vote of the property owners in compliance with Proposition 218, now part of the California Constitution.

### 2. What kinds of streetlights are there?

In Los Angeles, there are lights on wooden power poles (utilitarian lights), and lights on steel or concrete poles (electrolier streetlights).

#### **UTILITARIAN LIGHTS** (ON WOODEN POWER POLES)

Upon request by nearby residents or businesses, the Department of Water and Power may install one light on an existing power pole at an intersection, on a street, or in an alley no closer than every 300 feet. There is no fee for installation or maintenance. **This lighting is only for minimal traffic safety.**

Call the Department of Water and Power at 1-800-DIAL DWP (1-800-342-5397)

#### **ELECTROLIER STREETLIGHTS** (ON STEEL OR CONCRETE POLES)

This type of installation will provide an engineered lighting system on steel or concrete poles. Electrolier lighting is designed to provide continuous and uniform lighting on streets and sidewalks. Property owners are responsible for their share of the construction and maintenance costs. A vote by the affected property owners is required in accordance with Proposition 218. The City policy is to install electroliers with underground wiring that meets our standards for lighting level and uniformity. Call (213) 847-1456 to request a petition to begin the process.

### 3. What type of lamp is being used, and how does it compare to older types?

**High pressure sodium (HPS)** lamps are being used in most parts of the City. They are five times more efficient than **incandescent lamps**, and twice as efficient as **mercury vapor lamps**. HPS lamps have an orange-pink color. They do not attract flying insects the way other lamps do. HPS lamps are installed to replace incandescent and mercury vapor lamps in an effort to save energy and reduce operating cost. Replacement HPS lamps are designed to provide more illumination than the lamps that are being replaced. Flat glass cutoff fixtures are used to minimize glare and light trespass onto private property. For questions about lighting modernization or replacement, call (213) 847-1456.

### 4. Who is responsible for the installation of Streetlights?

The Bureau of Street Lighting within the Department of Public Works has overall responsibility for design, construction and operation of street lighting in Los Angeles. Most electrolier street lighting is installed by private contractors under contract with the Department of Public Works, or under permits

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related to private developments.

**5. Who pays for the installation, maintenance and operation of Streetlights?**

In general, property owners who will benefit from electrolier streetlights pay for the construction of new street lighting. In addition, benefiting property owners are responsible for cost of operation and maintenance collected annually on the County tax bill.

**6. What are street lighting maintenance assessments?**

In Los Angeles the property owners are responsible for the full cost of maintenance of their streetlights. The maintenance cost is billed to property owners as an assessment on their County tax bill. A typical annual street lighting maintenance assessment for a residential street is approximately **\$70** for each residential lot calculated in accordance to lot area acreage. The City provides electricity, re-lamping and cleaning, all needed repairs, information, and eventual modernization and replacement of the streetlights from this assessment.

**7. Better lighting is needed on my street. How can I get more lights or upgraded lights?**

**INSTALLATION OF ELECTROLIER STREETLIGHTS (ON STEEL OR CONCRETE POLES)**

If your street is lighted with only streetlights on wood power poles or your street has no street lighting at all, the Bureau of Street Lighting can design and construct a new system for you. **A petition from the Bureau of Street Lighting is required and may be obtained by calling (213) 847-1456.** The petition will include costs, description of lighting and other information. Current construction cost per 50-foot wide lot for a modern lighting system on most residential streets is approximately **\$3,400**. Annual maintenance assessments are approximately **\$70** per residential property calculated in accordance to lot area acreage. Special or ornamental lighting systems will result in a higher annual maintenance assessment.

**UPGRADING EXISTING ELECTROLIER STREETLIGHTS**

Upon written request, The Bureau of Street Lighting will investigate the existing street lighting system to determine what work is required to upgrade the lighting. The annual maintenance assessment may increase if the electrical energy usage increases or if special equipment is requested.

**8. How do I get more information on street lighting or make a request?**

To request better lighting or to have your property brought into the lighting district call (213) 847-1456.

For general questions regarding street lighting call (213) 847-1456.

For street lighting repairs call **(3-1-1)**.

For questions about street lighting maintenance assessments, call (213) 847-1500.

Requests for services may be sent to:

E- Mail: [streetlighting@bsl.lacity.org](mailto:streetlighting@bsl.lacity.org)

Bureau of Street Lighting  
1149 S. Broadway, Ste. 200  
Los Angeles, CA 90015

Website: [www.lacity.org/bsl](http://www.lacity.org/bsl)