



## Design Guide for **Hotel Lighting**



**IES Design Guide  
for Hotel Lighting**

Publication of this Committee report  
has been approved by IES.  
Suggestions for revision should  
be directed to IES.

Prepared by:  
Committee on Lighting for Hospitality Facilities

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**DEDICATION**

*The IES Hospitality Facilities Committee dedicates this document to  
Lloyd Reeder for his significant contribution.*



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## FOREWORD

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This Design Guide has been developed for designers, facility managers, and owners to aid in creating lighting systems for hotel applications.

Lighting is critical to the commercial success in the hospitality industry. Lighting is often the first feature that guests notice, and is the element that creates that all-important long-lasting positive impression. This first impression may form guests' opinions about the quality, character, convenience, and charm of the hotel even before they reach the front entrance.

This process of evaluation begins when the hotel is first seen from the street. During the day, it is based on the hotel's architecture and the surrounding area. At night, it is largely based on the way exterior lighting accents the building. Well designed outdoor lighting identifies the hotel and its entrance and welcomes the guests. It also reinforces a feeling of safety and security, and provides a first glimpse of the hotel's interior character and style.

Once indoors, proper lighting is essential in making sure the guests' impressions continue to be positive. This same principle continues as the guests walk down the corridors, visit their rooms, and have their first meal. Creative and effective lighting in restaurants, bars, and shops attracts more patrons, increases sales, and contributes to revenue growth.

Quality lighting is of the utmost importance to business travelers who work in their rooms and/or in the conference facilities. Effective, well designed lighting will make their stay pleasurable and productive,

entice them to return, and provide positive word of mouth references, which are excellent advertising. All these factors result in reinforcing the brand and are critical to the success of the property.

In addition to the guest benefits, good lighting also helps the staff work more efficiently and effectively and perform their tasks safely. Here again, lighting can improve productivity and increase the hotel's profitability. Lighting controls add convenience and reduce energy use and operating costs. Light source and power supply, luminaire efficiency, placement, and optical performance also affect operating and maintenance costs.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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Addressing every lighting issue of the hospitality industry would require a broader format than available here. Therefore, this Design Guide focuses on key areas in hotels and provides recommendations for the technologies and application designs available at the time it was written.

It is important to recognize that all documents are works in progress. While the main objective of lighting design is to serve human needs and enhance the human experience with high quality lighting, ways to achieve the objective are constantly evolving. Lighting technologies are continually changing. Effective energy utilization and sustainability issues become increasingly important considerations that alter design parameters. Daylighting and controls are becoming more and more integrated and complex. Design styles, trends, and the degree of public sophistication continue to evolve resulting in changes to the way lighting systems are designed.



**Image 1: Lighting reinforces building's identity and prominence, reveals details, and creates a memorable impression.** (Photo courtesy of Pauline Taylor)