

CITY OF BLACKFOOT

Community Forestry Policy Directive

GUIDELINES FOR AFFIXING DECORATIVE LIGHTING TO STREET TREES

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Decorative or seasonal lighting in street trees can add interest and vibrancy to the streetscape. Property owners, business owners, corporations, and associations are allowed to install temporary decorative or seasonal lighting on trees in the public right of way.

You must acquire one of two separate Street Use Permits for your tree-lighting project depending on the length of time your lighting is to remain on the tree:

1. A Street Use Seasonal-lighting permit; and/or
2. A Street Use Extended-lighting permit.

Please note:

- A Street Use Seasonal-lighting permit *is* required for temporary tree-lighting installations lasting less than 3 months. There is no fee for this permit.
- A Street Use Extended-lighting permit *is required* to affix tree lighting for longer than 3 months (and not to exceed 3 years). There is a small fee associated with this permit to provide for ongoing inspection as the tree matures.

The purpose of this permit is to ensure that the lighting is installed and maintained in a manner that protects public safety and the health of the tree. The City Forester or his designee will inspect permitted installations after both the installation and removal of the lights. If the installation remains on the tree longer than one year, additional annual inspections will be required.

Coordination with the Street Department is required for both the installation and removal of the lighting, depending on the method of installation or removal that is proposed (such as a scissor lift or truck-mounted aerial lift).

In all projects of tree lighting, the property owner, business owner, corporation, or association shall install and maintain the lighting in accordance with the following standards and conditions:

STANDARDS

- Trees must have a minimum 4-inch trunk diameter in order to properly support the lighting and prevent damage to the tree.
- Pruning branches to accommodate the installation and removal of lights shall not be allowed under a seasonal-lighting permit.
- Tree pruning associated with seasonal lighting requires an additional tree pruning permit.
- If any trees, tree trunks, branches, or limbs on trees within the right of way are cut, pruned, or damaged as the result of the lighting activity, the permittee (or adjacent property owner) shall be assessed damage fees.

- All pruning on trees existing in the City Right-of-way will be done according to ANSI Standard A300 as required in City Code, and performed by an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist.
- Strands of lights shall be installed at a height that does not impair or otherwise impede pedestrian or vehicle traffic. The strands must hang 8 feet or higher above sidewalks, and 14 feet or higher above vehicle-travel or parking lanes.
- All installations must conform to national electrical standards and codes. The applicant is responsible for obtaining any additional necessary permits for temporary or long-term installations.
- Lights and related components, such as attachments and electric cords, shall blend in with the color of the tree bark and branches.
- If, at any time, the lighting devices or their components become a safety hazard, they shall be removed at the expense of the permittee (or adjacent property owner).
- All non-functioning light strands, or those no longer in use, shall be removed from the trees by the permittee (or adjacent property owner if a permit was not required) before new light strands are installed.
- After a major storm event where tree damage may have occurred, the permittee (or adjacent property owner if a permit was not required) shall inspect the trees for damage and alert the City Forester of any problem.

The City of Blackfoot reserves the right to prune or remove trees to lessen potential threats to public safety. In the event of an emergency that requires action on trees that contain permitted seasonal lighting, the City of Blackfoot will not be held responsible for damages done to the fixtures and associated equipment.

LIGHTING ATTACHMENT

- All work on the lighting (either installation or removal) shall be performed while the trees are dormant. In general, work in trees shall *not be performed* from March 1 through May 30 to prevent bark damage and to avoid injury to the developing buds.
- Installation and removal of lighting shall always be done in a manner that does not harm the trees.
- Lights must be strung loosely enough to allow for at least a half-inch expansion of tree-branch diameter. This slack also allows the branch to sway during normal wind conditions. Any lights found by the city not having adequate slack or otherwise causing damage to the tree shall be loosened or removed and replaced by the permittee (or adjacent property owner).
- Under no circumstances should light fixtures, electrical wires, or other devices be attached to tree trunks, branches, or limbs with wire nails, screws, Duct tape, or masking tape.

TEMPORARY NO PARKING ZONES

You may need to temporarily restrict the parking adjacent to your lighting installation or removal work area by implementing temporary no-parking zones. Please work directly with the City Street Department for a required temporary closure (785-6220).

INSTALLATION METHODS

There are three methods of installing light strings in trees: **tracing**, **draping**, and **wrapping**. The preferred methods are tracing or draping. These methods are typically less harmful than wrapping.

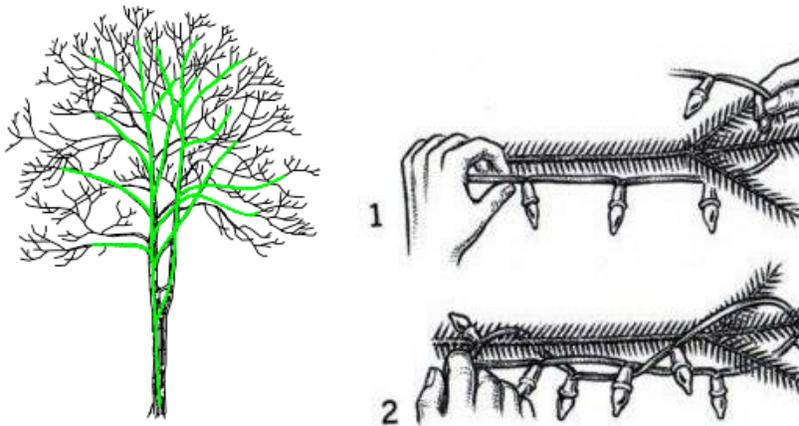


Figure 1: Tracing Method Light strings are installed along tree branches at least 2 inches in diameter with Velcro, florist tape, or other similar fastener.

Intermittent wrapping is also acceptable, but the lights shall not be affixed to any branch at intervals smaller than 18 inches.

Tracing can be used for either short-term or long-term installations. Otherwise causing damage to the tree shall be loosened or removed and replaced by the permittee (or adjacent property owner if a permit was not required).

Under no circumstances should light fixtures, electrical wires, or other devices be attached to tree trunks, branches, or limbs with wire, nails, screws, duct tape, or masking tape.

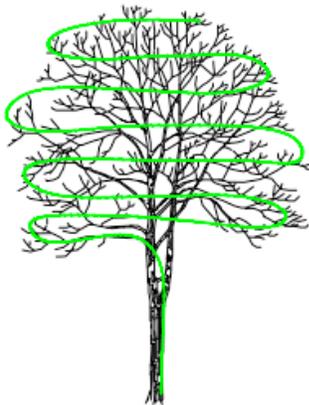


Figure 2: Draping Method Lights strings are installed along the outside of the tree canopy and are affixed to tree branches at least 1 inch in diameter with Velcro, florist tape, or other similar fastener. The lights shall not be affixed to the branch at intervals smaller than 18 inches. Draping can be used for either short-term or long-term installations.

Under no circumstances should light fixtures, electrical wires, or other devices be attached to tree trunks, branches, or limbs with wire, nails, screws, duct tape, or masking tape.

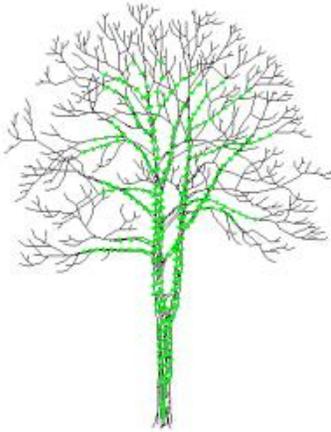


Figure 3: Wrapping Method Lights strings are installed by loosely wrapping the strings around the trunk or branches at least 2 inches in diameter. The distance between parallel sections of the wrapped string shall not be less than 2 inches. Wrapping tightly is not recommended.

Under no circumstances should light fixtures, electrical wires, or other devices be attached to tree trunks, branches, or limbs with wire, nails, screws, duct tape, or masking tape.

Wrapping can only be used for short-term installations of less than 3 months.

SEASONAL LIGHTING PERMIT

The Street Use seasonal-lighting permit requires a small permit fee and a minimum inspection deposit. The Community Forester or his designee will complete an assessment of the condition of the trees after lighting installation, as well as verification of additional inspections necessary based on the number of permitted trees and duration of the permit.

We require a final inspection when the permit expires, after tree lighting is removed. You must call the Community Forester or the Street Department to schedule this inspection on the first business day following the removal of all equipment. If electrical lights, wires, connectors, or other devices are found on street trees after the permit expiration date, or found to be installed without a permit, they may be removed and discarded by the city without notice. You (the property owner or permittee) may be billed for expenses incurred by the city.

FORESTRY DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

Gerry Bates, Community Forester	1-208-681-5964
Scott Hays, Parks and Recreation Director	1-208-785-8622
Richard Mangum, Public Works Director	1-208-785-8600 Ext. 5
Vaughn Key, Street Superintendent	1-208-785-8620
Kurt Hibbert, Planning Administrator	1-208-785-8600 Ext. 4
Paul Loomis, Mayor	1-208-785-2756