

## Crime and lighting

There is no direct link between higher levels of lighting and crime levels.

In 1996, the National Institute of Justice in the USA conducted an assessment of crime and violence, and published their work in *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*. The study found little support to support the misconception that "brighter is safer", and even suggested that poorly designed lighting might actually increase personal vulnerability. The report states:

- o *"The problematic relationship between lighting and crime increases when one considers that offenders need lighting to detect potential targets and low-risk situations. Consider lighting at outside ATM machines, for example. An ATM user might feel safer when the ATM and its immediate surrounding area are well lit. However, this same lighting makes the patron more visible to passing offenders. Whom the lighting serves is unclear."*

Other studies on light and crime include those in Clark's ["Outdoor Lighting Principles for Australia"](#) (crime was cut drastically during a period of power cuts); the success of IDA's ["Dark Campus" program](#) (Dark Campus Programs Reduce Vandalism and Save Money); the Ramsey and Newton studies for Home Office/CPU (no link between lighting and crime); the West Sussex experience in the period in the '80s when many street lights were turned off late at night.

Also there is an idea that an active amateur astronomer is likely to be more of a crime deterrent than a light, so encourage the former by turning off the latter!

More details on the CfDS' standpoint on lighting and crime can be found on our [lighting and crime](#) page.

<http://www.britastro.org/dark-skies/crime.html?00>