Aberdeenshire COUNCIL

From mountain to sea

**Appendix 4**

# Festive lighting

## Manual DRAFT

29 March 2018

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Legal and policy background

Aberdeenshire Council's support for the provision of festive lights is primarily to encourage commercial activity in our town centres at Christmas. The Council also recognises the desire of smaller communities to have festive lights and while column-mounted festive lights may not be appropriate for all communities, in such circumstances the *Festive Lights and Attachments to Street Lighting Columns Policy* commits us to assist communities in investigating alternatives to column-mounted displays.

Section 90 of the *Roads (Scotland) Act 1984* requires that anyone who wishes to fix overhead apparatus over, along or across a road (including associated footways and verges) must first obtain consent from the roads authority. Similarly, any free-standing features (such as Christmas trees) placed in the public road could be construed as an obstruction under Section 59 of this act and again consent must be obtained prior to installation

This manual sets out how consent can be obtained, the standards that must be met and the general conditions that will apply for anyone looking to install festive lights within the public road in Aberdeenshire. The *Banners, Bunting and Attachments to Lighting Columns Manual* gives further specific guidance and requirements relevant to festive lighting installations and should be read in conjunction with this manual.

This *Festive Lighting Manual* is directly referred to in the Policy and the requirements contained within this manual shall be mandatory for all non-trunk roads in Aberdeenshire. **Aberdeenshire Council may remove, without notice, any installation which has been installed without consent or which does not fully comply with the conditions of its consent. We will seek to recover from the responsible persons the costs for removal along with the costs of making good any damage caused to our assets.**

Enquiries and requests for permission involving the trunk road should be directed to the appropriate operating company (see section 7.2).

# 2 General principles

## 2.1 Festive-lighting season

Permission shall only be granted for festive-lighting installations to be installed for a **maximum of seven weeks** during the period from **14 November to 14 January**.

## 2.2 Commercial sponsorship

Festive-lighting installations within the public road must not feature the name, logo or any other marking associated with a commercial organisation.

## 2.3 Insurance

Anyone wishing to erect festive lighting within the public road must indemnify Aberdeenshire Council against any claim for loss, injury or damage whether to persons or property or both in any way caused by or connected with their installation.

Applicants must demonstrate evidence of insurance cover against third party claims to give cover up to £5,000,000 for the above purpose.

## 2.4 Location

The use of column-mounted festive lights and the provision of suitable columns fitted with sockets shall be limited to the main footfall areas in each settlement. This would include town centres and neighbourhood or village centres with shops or other community facilities which are regularly used in the late afternoon/evening over the festive-lighting season.

Other features, such as standalone Christmas trees shall be more appropriate for settlements not meeting the main footfall criterion and the Council's street lighting team can offer community groups advice on connecting apparatus to the mains electricity supply.

Festive lights must not obstruct traffic signs or impede driver or pedestrian visibility. Flashing lights shall not be permitted within 10m of traffic signals, pelicans, zebras or other controlled pedestrian crossings or within driver's sight lines when approaching such features.

Some street lights are mounted on wooden electricity poles. These are not suitable for supporting festive-light installations.

## 2.5 Installation, maintenance and removal

The installation, maintenance and removal of festive lights within public areas can expose both the person carrying out the operation and members of the general public to electrical, structural or traffic hazards. For this reason it is essential that any person doing this work is competent to do so.

Applicants shall be required to demonstrate both the electrical safety and structural adequacy of their installations in their application submission. All operations within the road shall comply with *Safety at Street and Road Works: a code of practice 2013*.

Risk assessments and method statements should be in place prior to commencing any works.

All festive decorations shall be fit for purpose and have an ingress protection of at least IP66

# 3 Electrical supply

## 3.1 Use of street-lighting electrical supply

Aberdeenshire's street lighting is powered by an unmetered electricity supply and the sum paid to the supplier is calculated from the electrical load and the burning hours of our street lights.

To ensure that the correct payment is made for all electricity used (and for reasons of electrical safety) festive lights may only be connected to the Council's street-lighting electrical supply when consent, linking each lighting feature to a specific column, has been granted.

Where permission is granted to use the street-lighting electrical supply, this shall only be done by connecting a 16A "Commando" plug into an existing matching socket on a column. The connection shall only be used to supply the single festive feature mounted on that column. **The use of adaptors or other arrangements to supply any light or feature other than that on the supporting column is strictly prohibited.**

Applicants, or others acting on their behalf, must not open, switch on/off or in any other way interfere with street-lighting cabinets, columns or other apparatus.

## 3.2 Payment for electricity

In the past Aberdeenshire Council has met the costs of electricity used by Christmas lights where these were supplied from the street lighting network. Increasing demands for festive lighting in our settlements coupled with on-going budget pressures, however, means that this discretionary expenditure is becoming harder to sustain and from 1 April 2021 applicants shall be required to pay in advance a charge covering the cost of electricity consumed.

This charge shall be calculated from the length of period applied for and total electrical load to be connected to the street-lighting supply as detailed in the annual application form. After the application form has been assessed, the applicant shall be notified of the charge and approval shall only be granted for connection to the

street-lighting electricity supply once full payment has been received. The charge shall be considered to be a fixed cost covering the proposed installation. Partial refunds shall not be made, for example, where the number of units connected is less than initially approved or where the hours of supply are less than applied for.

## 3.3 Private electrical supplies

Private electrical supplies for features within the public road must comply with the requirements of the current version of the IET Wiring Regulations. Protective earthing must be maintained at all times and a 30 mA RCD shall be installed at the point of origin. Supplies feeding features crossing streets must include the facility to allow the roads authority to isolate the feature in the event of an emergency without requiring access to private premises.

A SELV 25 Volt AC power supply shall be used for all electrical features mounted at a height of less than 2.5m above the footway or otherwise within arm's reach of the public.

Secondary electrical supplies (i.e. any electrical supply other than the street-lighting electrical supply to that column) must not be connected to a column-mounted feature. Street-lighting columns, or any attachment connected to them, must not be used to support cables or any other apparatus connected to a secondary electrical supply.

## 3.4 Testing and inspection

All installations must be inspected and tested prior to commissioning in accordance with the IET's *Guidance Note 3: Inspection & Testing*. Festive-light units must have undergone visual inspection and electrical testing no more than 6 months prior to the proposed installation date. This shall be carried out by an authorised electrical contractor or otherwise responsible qualified person who must complete and sign the Festive Lights Test Certificate.

# 4 Attachments to street-lighting columns

## 4.1 Feature Specification

Festive lighting features attached to street-lighting columns should satisfy the following requirements:

1. Windage of feature must not exceed 0.3m$^2$;
2. Feature should be mounted on lightweight aluminium frame and weigh no more than 10kg;
3. Low energy lights shall be used on features and power consumption shall be less than 50W;
4. Features must be located at least 1.0m below the street light; **and**
5. Features shall be tested (PAT) and inspected annually.

## 4.2 Structural adequacy of columns

Applicants wishing to mount festive lights on lighting columns should be aware of and comply with the requirements set out in section 2.3 of the *Banners, Bunting and Attachments to Lighting Columns Manual*.

## 4.3 Clearances

All column-mounted lights must be at least 2.5m above the footway (3.4m where horse riders may be expected) and must not extend to within 0.5m of the edge of the carriageway.

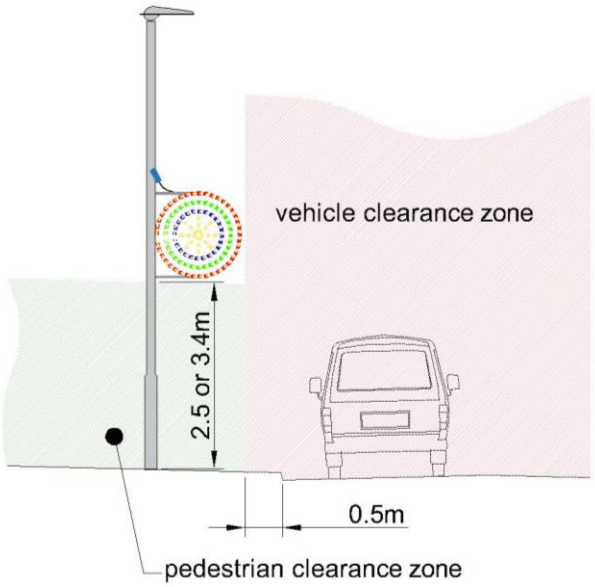


**Figure 4.1: Column-mounted festive lights**

# 5 Features crossing streets

## 5.1 Catenary wires

Applicants wishing to mount festive lights across streets should be aware of and comply with the requirements set out in section 6 of the *Banners, Bunting and Attachments to Lighting Columns Manual*.

## 5.2 Clearances

All festive-lights must be at least 5.8m above the carriageway and the 0.5m sections beyond either side of the carriageway (see Figure 5.1). The clearance height shall be increased to 7.5m on the freight routes identified in section 10 of the *Banners, Bunting and Attachments to Lighting Columns Manual*.

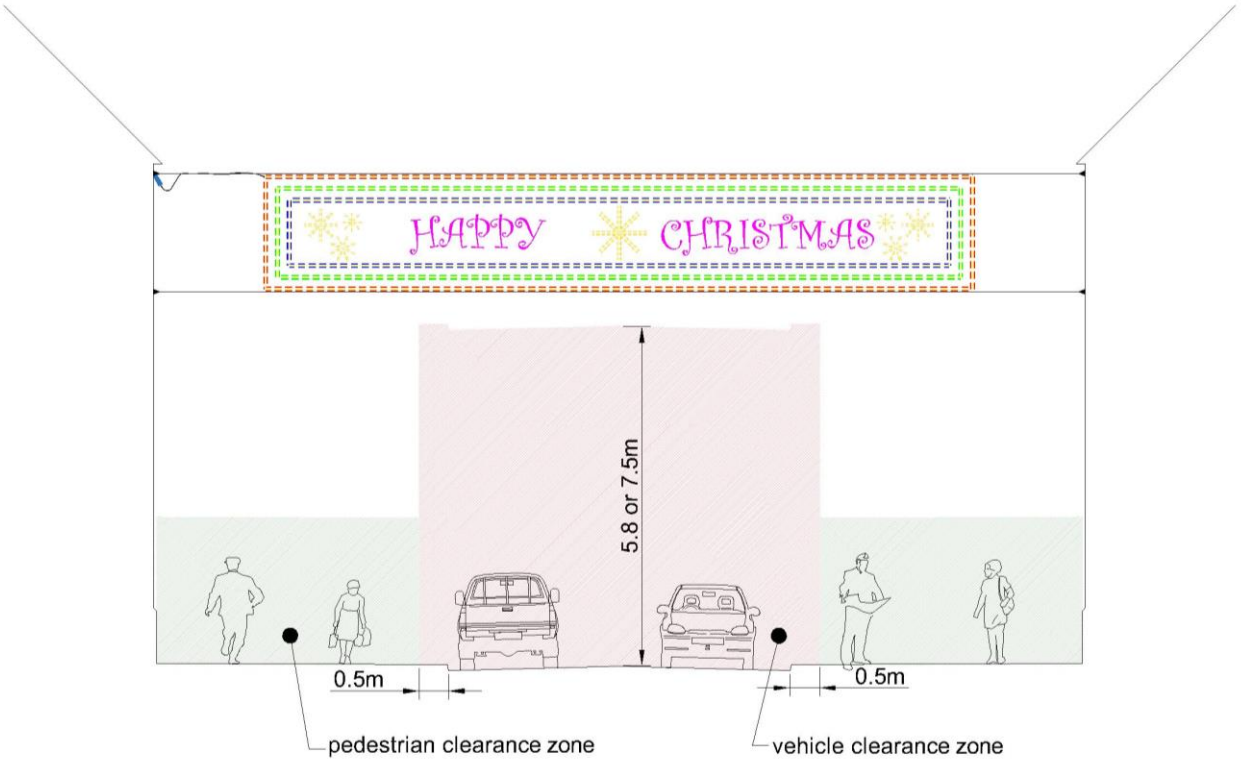


**Figure 5.1: Festive lights crossing streets**

## 6 Free-standing displays

Christmas trees and other free-standing festive displays within the public road shall require authorisation prior to installation.

Authorisation shall not be granted for connecting free-standing displays to the street-lighting electrical supply however the Street Lighting team can provide advice on alternative arrangements.

Where the lit-display is at ground level then additional precautions, such as a suitably robust barrier, should be considered to keep the public at least 2m away from any part of the display.

# 7 Applying for consent

## 7.1 Aberdeenshire Council

All applications must be made using the appropriate application form and submitted to:

Street Lighting Officer
Infrastructure Services (Street Lighting)
Aberdeenshire Council
Gordon House, Blackhall Road
INVERURIE, AB51 3WA

or by email to:

streetlighting@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Fully completed applications must be received no later than 1 September. Applicants are encouraged to submit their application as early as possible to afford officers the opportunity to proactively work with groups to ensure applications contain all the relevant details enabling groups to meet this deadline.

## 7.2 Trunk Road

The A90 and A96 are trunk roads. These are managed by Transport Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government rather than by Aberdeenshire Council.

All enquiries relating to proposals on the trunk road should be directed to

BEAR Scotland Limited
BEAR House
Inveralmond Road
Perth
PH1 3TW

Tel: 01738 448600
Email: enquiries@bearscotland.co.uk

# 8 Transitional arrangements

Aberdeenshire Council recognise that the requirements of this manual place additional burdens on groups seeking to provide festive-lighting displays in their communities. Accordingly, transitional arrangements shall apply to help ease the impact on affected groups.

**Except for the provisions listed below, the requirements of this manual shall apply from 1 April 2018**.

Section 2.2 – Commercial sponsorship: groups shall be allowed to use existing lights which feature the names or logos of commercial organisations as an integral part of that unit until 14 January 2019.

Section 3.1 – Use of street-lighting electrical supply: Where existing permanently wired connections from the street-lighting supply to catenary-wire mounting points or to Christmas tree sockets comply with current regulations, these shall be allowed to continue to be used for the serviceable lifetime of that connection.

Section 4.1 – Structural adequacy of columns: the requirement to demonstrate the structural adequacy of a column to support a festive light which previously had permission to be attached to that column shall be deferred until 14 January 2019.