

Why Your Department Should Consider Fire Scene Lighting

Even though it's not required by NFPA 1901, scene lighting is an extremely popular choice amongst departments for fire apparatus today. Tasks performed by your crew on fire scenes during the day are inherently dangerous, but the level of risk is elevated even further at night due to the lack of light. Scene lighting instruments are designed to increase scene visibility in situations where little light is available, significantly reducing this risk.

In general, scene lighting refers to the system of lights and fixtures your department uses to illuminate large areas of a scene, such as a fire ground, vehicle accident, or hazmat incident. Experts today say modern scene lighting should be able to hit a scene a hundred yards away.

Fire experts agree that the most important thing when it comes to scene lighting is having a usable light. Your apparatus can have lights all over the place, but if they aren't producing the right kind of light, generating the right amount of light, or hitting all the required areas, then they aren't much use at the scene of a fire or other emergency. Typically, effective scene lights for fire trucks are equivalent to a 500 watt quartz fixture or a 10,000 lumen or larger LED fixture.

When it comes to the type of scene lighting available, the standard for decades has been quartz halogen on a pole mounted to the apparatus. In the last five years or so, however, this has changed dramatically. LED, or light emitting diode, has now become the most popular lighting for scene lighting because the technology is extremely efficient, versatile, and can produce as much or more light than other sources with a relatively small fixture size. LEDs are very good at converting energy to light and can be as much as 10 to 50 times better than halogens depending on the light and the optics.

The downside to LED is that it has a higher cost up front. They also have complicated rating systems, which can make them difficult to compare to alternatives, and the electrical compatibility between AC fixtures and some generators is often troublesome. If this is an issue for your department, you may opt for HID lights instead. HID lighting systems are also efficient and extremely bright. However, they take time to warm up and can be electrically noisy. They also have a limited supply of parts available when it comes to repairs.

In the past, it's been common for fire departments to install four mounted scene lighting poles: one on each corner of the truck. Although this is functional, it means that when you get to a scene, half of your vehicle's lighting will be directed away from the scene. If your department has invested heavily in LED lighting, this adds up to an excruciating waste of resources.

Command Light is a company that specializes in producing scene lighting towers and fixtures that maximize your department's use of lighting resources. As the most trusted

source of elevated fire truck scene lights, Command Light understands the obstacles firefighters face everyday and they are determined to ensure scene visibility is not one of those obstacles.

Instead of going the traditional route, Command Light developed a new tower technology. With the Command Light alternative, 4 to 6 LEDs are mounted on a single tower that can be maneuvered into the position needed to provide the best lighting for each scene.

Featuring a patented (US Patent #5303621) movement, Command Light towers can be raised and rotated into endless positions to illuminate ditches, mountain slopes and other terrain. With Command Light's exclusive streetlight position, firefighters also have the option to hang the tower over the side of the vehicle. This vantage allows your crew to illuminate work areas and to prevent shadows near the side of the apparatus.

With the push of a button, Command Light towers deploy in less than 15 seconds. The truck tower stows just as quickly and easily with the unit's standard one-touch auto-park feature. Command Light's backlight option enables the tower's bottom row of lamp heads to rotate 180 degrees, making it possible to illuminate dual, opposing scenes.

When you manufacture your custom fire truck with Metalfab, you'll have the option to install a patented Command Light scene lighting system in your new vehicle. We highly recommend investing in the LED technology and maneuverable tower that enhance safety and that will save your department precious time and resources in the long run.

If you have any questions or if you would like to get started with the ordering process for your custom fire truck and/or scene lighting system, call us today at 1-800-561-0012 or contact Business Development Manager Ryan Stacey directly at rastacey@metalfabfiretrucks.com. We look forward to being your partner in safety and trusted manufacturer of your quality custom fire apparatus.