

Notes on Night Photography

Film: Kodak VPS-135 VeriColor III Professional ASA 160 print film.
Daylight/electronic flash.

The camera must be tripod-mounted. Set the camera lens aperture at F8 and shutter speed to T (for time) or B (for bulb).

Set your focus while there is still ample light. The following example is a 'rule of thumb' check for focusing: You want to photograph an area approximately 80 feet from you and have it in focus from 20 feet in front of you on out to 80 feet. The true depth of the area is 60 feet — in other words, the 80 feet from you minus the 20 feet in front of you that you do not need to have in focus. ($80 - 20 = 60$.) Use $1/3$ of 60 by disregarding the 20 feet between you and the first object that you want in focus. Next, take $1/3$ of the remaining 60-foot distance. You'll end up with the unwanted 20 feet, plus $1/3$ of $60 = 20$ for a total of 40. Focus your camera on an object 40 feet from you.

Start taking your first set of photos about 20 minutes after sundown. (If you can read the words "one dollar" on the face of a dollar bill held at normal reading distance, it is still too light.) Shoot your first photo at 15 seconds, then next one at 25 seconds, the third at 35 seconds and the fourth at 45 seconds.

Wait about two minutes then repeat the above basic pattern making a new set of photos about every four to five minutes. In the approximate middle of the roll, expose one group of one minute - two minute - three minute shots. Then continue the basic pattern until you have exposed the entire roll of film.

Always keep a record of the time and lens openings your camera was set at.

The amount of twilight used is extremely important. Too much will wash out your NIGHTSCAPING. Too little will make your NIGHTSCAPING have hot spots. Usually, the best time will be 30 to 45 minutes after sundown.

Use a standard one-hour photo processor as soon as practical after exposing the film to help you critique your photographic ability.