



lighting dictionary

the got light survival guide

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got light.

Below is a quick list of most commonly used technical terminology in lighting. Use and abuse this list to help navigate your way through the design process. Not enough new vocabulary for one sitting? Let us know how we can help!

COPPER HOOKS

A great solution for exterior pathway illumination. Copper Hooks come in six or eight foot heights, on rustic copper bases or ground stakes, that add light, as well as a decorative element. Illuminated lanterns or rustic pacific globes are paired with the hooks to surround a dining area, illuminate a lawn, driveway, or patio area.

COVER, SHIELD, WRAP

A cover is a Got Light must! A cover or shield is simply a three-sided masking tool to hide an uplight (and wires) so you don't see the ugly equipment that makes a beautiful room come alive. Covers come in varying or custom colors to blend into the venue walls or architecture. A "wrap" is no different, except it's made of custom velvet and surrounds a lighting TREE or pole to help disguise and hide the equipment that makes the magic happen.

DAPPLE

Dapple is a term used for "soft textured light", created by using a GOBO in a light fixture to create shadow and texture. Dapple is commonly used when you don't want a stylized gobo or motif and the end goal is soft diffusion. Often "dappled" light looks like subtle, natural soft light through leaves or branches, for a more organic design.

FILTER

A piece of plastic like film that goes in front of the light source on a lighting fixture to create color. See GEL below.

GEL

Synonymous with FILTER or color. A colored material (thousands to choose from) that goes on a lighting fixture to create colored light. Please consult the GOT LIGHT COLOR GUIDE for assistance in choosing the best color for your event. We are also happy to help you choose the right colors to create the best mood AND make you and your guests look fabulous in photos!

GOBO

A gobo is a laser cut stainless steel stencil cutout or high resolution glass slide that creates a pattern, logo, or other design when light is projected through it. Gobos are used to create shadows with light, from literal projections, words, or monograms, to abstract stylized motif projections. A gobo can be "soft/diffuse" or "hard edged", allowing for varying focus and designs. There are thousands to choose from and they add a dynamic layer to any design. Gobos can also be custom made to match invitations, linens, or other design motifs, tying the entire design and event together.

ITALIAN BISTRO LIGHT

Also referred to as "IPL's", "Light Strings", "Piazza Lights". Italian Bistro Lights are wired strands in any length with round or pear shaped bulbs, similar to the lights you would see in a café or bistro in Italy. You can string IPL's over a dining area, across a lawn, in a barn, and almost anywhere for added decor and elegance. Often, just using IPL's as a main light source provides sufficient enough light for an exterior evening affair.

LED LIGHTING

Eco-friendly LED Uplighting uses one-tenth the power of conventional lighting and is a richer, fuller, brighter light. LED saves on power, waste, and emits very low heat. LED uplighting can be used and programmed as a single color for an event. LED is also capable of slowly and elegantly shifting through infinite colors and color combinations. LED Uplighting is often used when there are numerous transitions throughout an event, allowing for multiple shifts in mood and color, or to heighten the energy during dancing!

MOVING LIGHTS

Also known as "intelligent lighting", Moving Lights can be music-synchronized "club" lights that project an array of color and pattern onto a dance floor or area to heighten energy during dancing. Moving lights can also be custom programmed to move and change to create an infinite array of designs and looks throughout an event.

PATTERN

Pattern is synonymous with GOBO, or in other words, is the end result of inserting a gobo into a lighting fixture. Pattern refers to the projected image or texture desired out of a lighting projection. We are happy to help assemble pattern and gobo options for you to choose from to match your overall event style and design. If pattern is not your thing, often DAPPLE is a good option, or no pattern at all can be just as effective using the right lighting and color.

PIN SPOT

A pin spot is a sharp, focused light directed at a floral centerpiece, wedding cake, or certain types of decor. Pin spotting not only helps illuminate the room, but can make dining tables pop with light. Pin spots can be white light or they can be colored with a light tinted GEL to help bring out the colors of a floral centerpiece. Pin spots are best for rooms or venues where the pin spot can be mounted or aimed from above the tables. If that's not an option, pin spots can be mounted to a TREE along the perimeter of the room and aim towards the centerpiece or cake at an angle. Certain venues are not conducive to pin spotting as sometimes they can blind guests during dinner! Pin spots are also not good lighting solutions for tall branchy florals as the light is so "pin-pointed" it's difficult to capture the branches. For large centerpieces, often we will recommend two-sided pin spotting for the best look. We are always happy to advise whether or not pin spotting is appropriate or effective based on your venue and florals.

STATION ACCENT

Station accent lighting, unlike a sharp PIN SPOT, goes next to food stations, cocktail stations, desserts, escort card tables, registration tables, and other stations that need some attention. Without accent lighting, food and beverage stations will most definitely be in the dark. Station Accents contain two discrete fixtures to illuminate a station with diffused and slightly tinted illumination for a soft glow of light, offering a much broader wash of light than a pin spot. Got Light recommends one station accent per six foot or eight foot station. For double stations, we recommend placing a station accent on either side of the station for dual lighting. Typically station accents are slim, 8-10' tall, and wrapped or disguised with velvet "socks" and "skirts" to hide the lighting tree. The velvet wraps come in an array of colors, typically to match or blend into the linen color or venue walls.

TREE

A tree is a lighting term used for a vertical pole, also known as a "lighting position", "truss tower", "pipe", or "lighting pole". Trees don't need water at Got Light, but are a vital component to a design to get lights, PIN SPOTS, STATION ACCENTS, or WASHES up in the air and away from guests. Trees are typically 8-15' tall and ground supported, hugging walls to be discretely out of the way of guest traffic. At Got Light we wrap our trees and bases with custom velvets to disguise and hide the metal tree and cords, helping it to disappear and blend into the room.

UPLIGHT

Uplights are compact lighting fixtures in varying sizes and wattages (depending on the event space) that are placed on the ground up against the perimeter walls or key architectural features, adding light and color to the walls, ceiling, and providing an ambient indirect glow. Uplights shine up a wall and naturally fill a space with light and color. We consider uplighting to be the primer or "base coat" to lighting, being the first course of action to transform a room with light. For exteriors, uplighting is used on key landscape elements and trees, adding drama and illumination to an outdoor setting. Uplighting can be any color of your choice, preferably a color that ties in with the linens, florals, or overall color palette.

WASH

A wash thankfully doesn't involve water or soap, but is the most commonly used term for event lighting. Washes in lighting are merely broad projections of illumination, color, and/or pattern. A wash is sometimes a necessity, not a design element, such as a "band wash". Or a wash can be colored or patterned to introduce character and design, such as a "ceiling wash", "wall wash" or "dance wash". In lighting, a wash merely refers to projection(s) of illumination to either establish visibility or to liven up a space with more illumination, style, or color.