



2026 EDITION

The Volusia County Homeowner's Guide to Landscape Lighting Costs

What a fair quote looks like, why two bids for the same yard can differ by three times, and the questions that expose a corner-cutter before you sign anything.

Outdoor Lighting Daytona

outdoorlightingdaytona.com · (386) 267-9834

Why Two Quotes for the Same Yard Differ by 3x

Ask three companies to light the same Port Orange front yard and you can get numbers from \$1,800 to \$6,000. None of them are necessarily lying. They are quoting three different systems that happen to share the word "lighting."

The three tiers you are actually comparing

Tier	Fixtures	Typical bid	What year five looks like
Kit-grade	Plastic or thin aluminum, stake-mounted, big-box sourced	\$1,500 to \$2,500	Dim, tilted, half dead. Housings crack, sockets corrode.
Mid-grade	Cast aluminum, mixed component brands	\$2,500 to \$4,000	Working but pitted and chalky. Finish fails near irrigation and salt air.
Coastal-grade	Solid brass or 316 stainless, sealed connections, pro transformer	\$3,500 to \$6,000+	Patinaed and working. Housings usually carry lifetime warranties.

By the beach, this table compresses to one honest column. Salt aerosol settles on every metal surface within a few miles of the surf line, and coastal lighting suppliers commonly report standard fixtures failing inside two years of oceanfront installation. Brass and 316 stainless do not rust; they form a protective patina and keep going.

The rule that saves you money twice: the cheapest bid is usually the most expensive system per year of working life. Divide each quote by the years the fixtures will actually survive here.

What Each Fixture Should Cost, Installed

These are typical installed prices in Central Florida for contractor-grade brass fixtures, including the fixture, wire share, connection, and labor. Treat them as sanity-check ranges for reading bids.

Fixture type	Installed range	Notes
Uplight / spotlight	\$250 to \$400	The workhorse. Bed-mounted, adjustable, glare-shielded.
Path light	\$250 to \$380	Spacing matters more than count: 8 to 12 ft apart.
Well light (in-ground)	\$300 to \$450	More digging, sealed housing, drainage bed.
Downlight / moonlight	\$350 to \$550	Canopy mounting labor; stainless standoffs protect the tree.
Hardscape / step light	\$200 to \$350	Often installed during masonry; retrofit costs more.
Underwater / wet niche	\$400 to \$650	Wet-location rating is non-negotiable.
Transformer (multi-tap, stainless)	\$400 to \$900	Sized with 20 to 30% headroom for expansion.

Whole-project ranges

- **Front-yard focus, 8 to 12 fixtures:** roughly \$2,500 to \$5,500
- **Front plus back, 15 to 20 fixtures:** roughly \$5,000 to \$9,000
- **Full property or estate, 20 to 30+ fixtures:** \$7,000 to \$15,000 and up

Operating cost is the good news: LEDs use at least 75% less energy than the halogens they replaced, per the U.S. Department of Energy, and a typical 15-fixture low-voltage system draws under 100 watts total.

Where the Money Actually Hides in a Quote

Fixture count is the number everyone fixates on, but four quieter line items move a Volusia County quote more than one extra path light ever will.

1. The transformer

An undersized or bargain transformer is the silent killer of low-voltage systems. Look for a stainless, multi-tap unit with surge protection and 20 to 30% capacity headroom. In the most lightning-prone region of the country, surge protection is not optional equipment.

2. Wire runs and trenching

Volusia's sandy soil digs easily, which keeps trenching labor reasonable, but distance still costs. Long runs need heavier-gauge cable to prevent voltage drop, and crossing a driveway or paver walk adds boring or lifting labor. A quote that never mentions wire gauge is a quote that plans to fight physics.

3. Connections

Wire nuts wrapped in electrical tape fail underground within a couple of Florida wet seasons. Waterproof gel-filled splices or heat-shrink connections cost a little more per joint and are the main reason one system works in year six while its neighbor flickers.

4. The aiming visit

A system aimed in daylight is a guess. The return visit after dark, adjusting every beam with the homeowner present, is included by serious installers and skipped by the rest. Ask directly whether it is in the price.

Beachside note: within the salt-air zone, insist on brass or 316 stainless housings and IP65-or-better sealing on every fixture, including the ones tucked out of sight. The corrosion tax is real and it compounds.

The 12 Questions That Expose a Corner-Cutter

1. **Can I see the design lit up at night before I commit?** The single best filter. A demo night costs the installer an evening; skipping it costs you the design.
2. **What metal are the fixture housings, exactly?** "Metal" is not an answer. Brass, copper, or 316 stainless is.
3. **Does the warranty cover labor, or only parts?** Fixture-only warranties leave you paying a service call for every claim.
4. **Is there a registration deadline or transfer restriction on the warranty?** Registration traps are a documented industry trick.
5. **How are wire connections made underground?** The answer should include the words waterproof, gel, or heat-shrink.
6. **What gauge cable, and how deep is it buried?** Listen for 12-gauge or heavier on long runs, and burial around 6 inches.
7. **How is the transformer sized?** You want stated headroom, a multi-tap unit, and surge protection.
8. **Will you locate my irrigation lines before digging?** Cut irrigation is the most common installation damage complaint.
9. **Is the night aiming visit included in this price?** In writing.
10. **Who answers the phone after final payment?** Ask for a recent client from more than a year ago and actually call them.
11. **Is this quote fixed, and what triggers a change order?** Changes should always require your written approval before work continues.
12. **What happens when one light fails in year two?** The answer tells you whether you are buying a system or an orphan.

Red Flags from a Thousand One-Star Reviews

Read enough negative reviews of lighting installers, anywhere in the country, and the same five failures repeat. Every one of them is detectable before you sign.

The vanishing act

Lights fail shortly after installation and the installer stops answering. The pre-signing test: how fast did they respond before the sale? A company that takes four days to return a sales call will not be faster for warranty work.

The evaporating warranty

"Lifetime warranty" that turns out to cover the fixture body only, requires registration within 30 days, or dies with a discontinued product line. Ask to read the warranty document itself before you sign anything.

The growing bill

A vague one-line quote becomes a final invoice with "additional work" on it. Itemized quotes with written change-order rules prevent this entirely.

The maintenance mirage

"Free first-year maintenance" that no one can ever schedule. Get the visit month written into the contract at signing.

The trench surprise

Cut irrigation lines, buried valves, lawn damage nobody discussed. Insist on utility and irrigation locating before digging, and on restoration expectations in writing.

The pattern behind the pattern: almost every horror story is a communication failure that showed up early as slow replies, vague answers, or pressure to sign fast. Trust the early signal.

The Coastal Spec: What Salt Air Demands

Volusia County properties split into two exposure zones, and the right spec differs between them.

Beachside and riverfront (the salt zone)

- Solid brass, copper, or 316 stainless housings only. 316 stainless contains molybdenum, which resists salt pitting that ordinary 304 stainless cannot.
- IP66-or-better sealing on fixtures with direct ocean exposure; IP65 minimum elsewhere.
- Stainless hardware everywhere. One carbon-steel screw becomes one rust streak down your stucco.
- Sealed, gel-filled connections; salt-laden moisture finds any unsealed joint.

Mainland and golf communities

- Brass still wins on lifespan, but the irrigation system is the main enemy: reclaimed water and fertilizer spray chew through cheap finishes.
- Surge protection matters most here: NOAA data puts Central Florida at the top of the national lightning maps, and mainland systems ride the same grid the storms hit.
- HOA communities such as LPGA International and Pelican Bay may review exterior lighting plans; a written photometric plan speeds approval.

Color temperature belongs in the spec too: 2700K warm white flatters stucco, coquina, and tropical planting, reads as intentional rather than industrial, and avoids the harsh blue cast that draws insects and neighbor complaints alike.

The Honest DIY Math

DIY is a legitimate path, and the arithmetic deserves honesty instead of scare copy.

	Big-box kit	Quality DIY (contractor parts)	Professional install
Upfront, 10 lights	\$300 to \$600	\$1,500 to \$2,500	\$2,500 to \$5,500
Typical working life	1 to 3 years	10+ years if wired well	15 to 20+ years
Weekend cost	1 weekend	2 to 3 weekends	none
Design quality	Row of stakes	Your eye, learned live	Composed scenes, night-aimed
When one run dies	Replace the kit	Your Saturday	Warranty call

Where DIY genuinely goes wrong is rarely the fixtures; it is voltage drop on long runs, unsealed connections, and undersized transformers. If you do go DIY, buy contractor-grade brass from a real lighting supplier, use gel splices, and oversize the transformer. You will have built the mid-tier system from page 2.

What DIY cannot buy is the part professionals undersell: design. The difference between a lit yard and a composed one is beam angles, layering, and restraint, and it is easiest to see in a side-by-side demo on your own property, which is exactly why we give the demo away free.

What the Process Should Look Like

1. **Walkthrough (daylight, ~45 minutes).** The designer listens first: how you use the yard, what annoys you after dark, what the HOA requires.
2. **Demo night (after sunset, ~1 hour).** Working fixtures staged on your actual trees and facade. You approve the look standing in your own driveway, or you change it on the spot.
3. **Written proposal (within days).** Fixture-by-fixture, with metals, transformer sizing, wire plan, warranty terms, and one fixed number.
4. **Installation (1 to 2 days for most homes).** Irrigation located first, cable trenched and buried, transformer mounted and programmed, beds restored as the crew goes.
5. **Night aiming visit.** Every beam adjusted after dark, glare eliminated, controls walkthrough, warranty documents handed over.
6. **Year-round operation.** An astronomic timer tracks sunset year round; annual checkups keep aim true as trees grow.

Calendar honesty: in Central Florida the busy season for lighting installs runs October through December. If you want the yard lit for the holidays, the demo night should happen by early fall.



See Your Own Yard Lit Before You Spend Anything

The free demo night is the whole pitch: our lighting pros stage real brass fixtures on your property after dark, aim them while you watch, and leave you a written plan whether you hire us or not.

Call (386) 267-9834

or visit outdoorlightingdaytona.com

Pricing in this guide reflects typical Central Florida ranges observed in 2026 and industry data including U.S. Department of Energy LED efficiency findings. Every property differs; treat these figures as background for reading quotes; only a written proposal is a quote. Outdoor Lighting Daytona connects homeowners with independent licensed lighting professionals.