

<http://www.halloween-online.com/sfx/halloween-projects-black-light-magic.html>

BLACK LIGHT MAGIC

Black lights are a great addition to your Halloween haunt and displays.

What is black light? If you turn on a black light bulb in a dark room, what you can see from the bulb is a purplish glow. What you cannot see is the **ultraviolet light** that the bulb is also producing. Our eyes can see the visible light in a spectrum ranging from red through orange, yellow, green, blue and violet. Above violet is ultraviolet light, which we cannot see.

What you see glowing under a black light, whether it is a fluorescent poster, something you've painted with fluorescent paint or a newly-washed white T-shirt, is different **phosphors**. A phosphor, is any substance that emits visible light in response to some sort of radiation. In other words, a phosphor converts the energy visible light.

So a fluorescent paint contains a phosphor that converts UV radiation into a specific color of visible light. Normal colors simply reflect light, but a fluorescent color absorbs the radiation and re-emits it in the visible spectrum, sort of like a light bulb emits light, so it looks much brighter than a normal color.

Black light units and there accompanying bulbs come in a variety of sizes, anywhere from six inches to four feet in length. Most are AC powered, but you can also get some of the smaller ones in battery powered.



Costumes and masks that have glow-in-the-dark (fluorescent) properties make a great addition to your black light haunt.

The **Totally Skele-Bones** costume available from **Fun World** has very realistic looking sculpted bones that glow in the dark, which makes them perfect for use under black lights. For more information on these great costumes and some spooky ways of using them see our [Skele-bones](#) article in the Makeup & Costumes section.

Positioning black lights - Since UV light is not very strong and doesn't travel very far its important to use the right strength/size blacks lights to illuminate your Halloween props, decorations, etc. Use smalls (18" to 24") lights on smaller area and displays where you can position the unit(s) close. Use larger 4 foot units to cover large areas, scenes and props. Whenever possible the black light unit should be positioned and/or camouflaged so that it cannot be seen by your visitors.

As with any electrical device, care must be taken to protect against electrocution and accidents. Make sure that the cord is hidden from view and positioned where it won't be tripped over or snagged by feet. No electrical fixture should be used outdoors if the weather is bad, i.e. raining, very high humidity, etc.



You can now buy those bags of stringy cob-webs available during the Halloween season that are made for black light use.

Write scary warning messages on your front walk using colored chalk or washable fluorescent paint.

Place a black light on the ground in front of your graveyard scene or hang one up on the side of a prop or tree.

A really cool, easy and cheap effect for your graveyard or somewhere in your haunt if you are using a black light is to get the biggest leaves you have laying around in your yard and spray paint them with fluorescent paint, let dry and then scatter around your ghouls or tombstones and when you turn on your black light -PRESTO - your leaves will glow brightly and you'll actually be able to see them!

If you need clothing, sheets, cotton rope (rope spider webs), or other fabric to glow in the dark, you can soak it in Woolite laundry soap or RIT Whitener/Brightener for an hour or so. Wring it out, don't rinse!! and let it dry. It will glow bright blue. This works best on white fabric.



The **Black Light Hair Spray** from **Fun World** is great for painting your props. This spray goes on nearly invisible and should be sprayed onto the prop as evenly as possible. It helps to spray the paint on while the prop is under a black light so you can actually see where it's going.



Painting your props with this invisible fluorescent paint will make them glow eerily under black lights enhancing their overall effect. See how we've used it in our [Giant Spider Web](#) articles. You can also use it on Halloween signs, Costumes, Masks, skeletons, bats and other decorations. Paint plaster or plastic skulls with fluorescent paint and display in your graveyard, on fence posts, etc.

Use fluorescent fabric paint or spray paint to add flare to your props or goblins in the graveyard.

BLACK LIGHT TIPS & TRICKS

If you have a graveyard scene with tombstones, you can trace over the epitaph with glow in the dark fabric paint or pens. When it dries it should be transparent, but will glow eerily under the black light.