FX Lights: Step by Step

Currently, the workflow for lights that flicker or change intensity, or that are animated in their motion or other parameters, is to create an FX light in Radiant (as a .efx file). This page is a specific step-by-step for getting your light set the way you need in your map.

This assumes you will start by creating a regular light in Radiant, and getting it to look the way that you want. Then you will transfer those settings to the parameters of the FX light. This applies to either an omni or spot.

Some of these parameters exist in more than one tab. This workflow has some known bugs and hitches (described below).

Set up position and color:
1. 'Fx-> New effect'. Also, turn on 'Fx -> Fx Rendering Enabled'
2. Place the new entity at the same position as your Radiant light
3. In 'FX Outline' : rename the default element (to "Light" or something more explicit)
4. In 'FX Parameters -> Visuals' : set 'Type = Dynamic Light'
5. Add a visual and click Edit; in the editor : select a Lighting Description from the dropdown (if you want to populate KVPs from a template). Edit KVPs to match your Radiant light
6. some parameters are NOT read from the Visuals KVPs, they are overridden by other parameters. The main options controlled here are : LIGHT TYPE; SHAPING (except Radius and FOV)
7. In Visuals -> Color section : edit Intensity, Radius, FOV. In the 'FX Graph' -> Color : select a knot on the curves, RMB -> Set color for knot (both knots)
8. In Movement -> Rotation Geometry : set the angle of the light
9. In Generation -> Origin : set your offset (if needed)

Set up animation:
1. FX Properties -> Generation. Set to 'Looping' so it's easier to see & test [even if it's a One Shot – you can set it back before saving & publishing]
2. Determine lifetime (in ms)
3. Set Lifetime min and max, and Interval. In most cases, they will all be the same. If Interval is lower than the min, it will spawn extra particles, and the light may build up too bright at the end of its life. If it is higher than the max, you may get it randomly going black. [if your light is a One Shot, the Interval only matters for test purposes]
4. FX Graph : set the curves for Color, Intensity, FOV, and Radius. To add a knot : Shift + MMB

Set up a light inside an exploder:
1. open 'Exploder Manager' window. With your FX light selected, RMB -> "Create New Exploder from selection."
2. test it by running 'Play Exploder'. Stop it by running 'Kill Exploder'. (NOTE : 'Stop Exploder' will stop playback, but leave the time where it is. Kill will reset to the start)

Saving and publishing:

1. In 'Fx Outline' : right click the name (with the red text), and select 'Save effect as'. Save it to the 'fx/light' folder
2. Submit Test your changelist in Rex
3. Submit in P4V

Known issues:

1. FX lights do not have the ability to use 'Never' shadows. They are either Always live, or Off. This will blow your shadow budget very quickly.
2. The fx entities are instanced, from the EFX file. You can't override anything - you will have to save as a new effect. The only things you can change per-instance are whats in the Entity Info KVPs. (only individual Origin and Angles, and Lighting State)