

Photovoltaic Systems Plan Review and Permitting Requirements

Plan Review

Plan Review by the Building Division is required for all PV panel installations with a few exceptions enumerated in section A, paragraph 1 below. However, plans shall be submitted when applying for permits.

A. Building Plan Review

1. Building plan review is not required when all of the following are complied with:
 - a) Total panel weight (including frame) is not greater than 5 pounds/square-foot.
 - b) Maximum concentrated load at each point of support is not greater than 40 pounds.
 - c) Maximum height above the roof surface does not exceed 18 inches.
 - d) PV panels are installed on the rooftop
 - e) PV panels are not ballasted.

Note: If building plan review is not required, a site plan showing the building footprint and location of PV panels shall be presented when applying for a permit.
2. Building plan review submittal documents shall include:
 - a) A framing plan showing and specifying existing and new framing providing support.
 - b) Construction details of anchorage, interconnection of elements and weather proofing of roof perforations as applicable.
 - c) Structural calculations verifying capacity of proposed system to resist vertical and lateral loads.
3. Building plan review and permits are required for all ballasted installations.
4. All non-ballasted installations shall specify the method of mechanical attachment to supporting structural elements. Structural elements include, but are not limited to roof rafters, trusses, purlins, beams, and blocking. Plywood sheathing and spaced sheathing are not considered structural members.
5. Roof penetrations shall be made water tight.

B. Electrical Plan Review:

1. Electrical plan review is required for PV System installations in Multi-Family or Commercial/ Industrial projects.
2. For single-family and duplex residential installations, electrical plans are not required to be submitted to the Building Division for review; that is, an electrical permit will be issued without an electrical plan review. The electrical plan shall be reviewed by the electrical inspector at the job site during inspection.

Notes:

- a) *Electrical plan review will be provided prior to issuance of an electrical permit when requested by the applicant.*

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- b) *While electrical plan review for single-family and duplex residential buildings are generally not required, the Building Official may ask that an electrical plan review be conducted prior to permit issuance due to the complexity of the installation.*
3. Electrical plan review submittal documents shall include:
- a) System configuration
 - b) Site drawings showing locations of photovoltaic and utility interconnection point
 - c) Location of modules, array, equipment configuration showing location of Balance of System
 - d) Conduit sizes and routing, location of disconnecting means, and required overcurrent devices
 - e) Short circuit current and open circuit voltage clearly shown and summarized.

C. Fire Plan Review

Fire Department plan review is not required. The Photovoltaic Installation Guidelines issued by the California State Fire Marshal is not enforced in the City of San Jose.

Permits

Planning, Building, and Electrical permits are required for Photovoltaic (PV) System installations. Public Works permits may also be required as specified in Permits section D below.

A. Planning Permit

- 1. Planning Permits are not required for rooftop PV panels installed in commercial, industrial or residential buildings. However, the PV panels should be installed to minimize visual impacts, and must meet the minimum development standards prescribed in Title 20 of the City's Municipal Code.
- 2. Planning Permits are required for PV panels installed in locations other than a rooftop.

B. Building Permit

Building Permits are required for all PV panel installations.

Exception: *A building permit is not required when both of the following conditions are met: (1) the project is exempt from a building plan review as delineated in the Plan Review section A, paragraph 1 above and (2) the PV panels are to be installed in the rooftop of a building that do not contain more than two dwelling units.*

C. Electrical Permit

Electrical Permits are required for all PV panel installations.

D. Public Works Permit

Public Works permits are required if the PV installations involve the use of a public right-of-way such as occupation, trenching, underground boring, etc.