



## Community Development Department

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### **SOLAR PERMITTING**

Permits are required from the City's Community Development Department and will vary depending on the project. NOTE: The local power company, Wisconsin Rapids Water Works and Lighting Commission (WWLC), has their own process and this sheet does not explain their requirements in full.

#### **General Permitting and Inspection Process**

- Installer must have the proper state licensing – this may include electrical, building, or alternative energy licensing. Proof of insurance may also be required prior to requesting a permit.
- Installer completes the Residential or Commercial Project Permit Application form. Forms are available on the City website at <https://www.wirapids.org/permits-and-inspections.html> The form is submitted to the Community Development Department with the permit fee and complete project plans. Reference the [City Fee Schedule](#).
- Upon submission and review of a complete application, a permit will be issued  
Necessary submission items include:
  - Completed Application
  - Site Plan
  - Electrical Line Drawing
  - Typical time for the review and issuance of a solar power permit for systems less than 10kW is 3 working days or less.
- If any digging will occur as part of the solar project, Diggers Hotline (1-800-242-8511) should be contacted to locate any utilities a minimum of three days prior to starting the project.
- Upon completion of the project a final inspection will be performed by Community Development Staff. To schedule an appointment please call 715-421-8228. Ground mounted solar projects may require an interim inspection for footings.
- After completion, commissioning installer/responsible party must send completed Distributed Generation (DG) Interconnection Agreement to WWLC. Agreement form must be signed by the customer/owner. Forms may be found on the State's PSC website as well as the overview of PSC 119, which regulates interconnection. <https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/ForUtilities/Energy/DistributedGenerationInterconnectionProcedure.aspx> The DG Application should be submitted in advance of project start. An overview of the Interconnection process can be found at <http://www.wrwwlc.com/interconnection/> For assistance please contact Shawn Reimer at [shawn.reimer@wrwwlc.com](mailto:shawn.reimer@wrwwlc.com) or 715-422-9039.
- Installer makes commissioning appointment with a utility representative to obtain final power utility inspection and schedule change in meter before bi-directional unit. Installers do not pull meters.
- Project is commissioned and begins producing energy.

### **Supplemental Standards for Building Mounted Solar**

- No portion of a panel may extend beyond the roof surface or wall surface to which it is attached.
- The solar energy system must comply with maximum height requirements.
- Roof mounted panels can be fixed or moveable and may be placed at an angle to maximize efficiency.
- Solar energy systems located on building facades must be integrated with overall design of the building and may not project more than 4 feet from the face of the wall.
- Solar systems must be certified and approved by the electric utility company.
- If more than 50% of the panels are not operational for a period of 12 months or more, the approval may be terminated.
- A solar access permit must be submitted to the City.

### **Supplemental Standards for Ground Mounted Solar**

- The surface area must not exceed 5% of the lot area.
- The solar system must not exceed 15 feet in height.
- Setback requirements must be met.
- Solar systems must be located in side or rear yards, but can be located within front yards with Plan Commission approval when necessary for operation.
- Solar systems must be certified and approved by the electric utility company.
- If the system is not operational for a period of 12 months or more, the approval may be terminated.
- A solar access permit must be submitted to the City.

### **Best Practices**

Here are some suggested practices that *may* help make solar easier, cheaper and safer:

- Submit Distributed Generation forms ahead of project completion to accelerate utility approvals.
- Minimize installer/contractor visits by planning ahead or coordinating same day inspections; such as with the City's final inspection and then the utility interconnection commissioning appointment.
- Have ready to sign at City final inspection any required utility forms/electric inspection certificates.
- Per electric code, permanently and clearly label all required devices, including the AC Disconnect near the meter to improve visibility and safety.
- Always leave room for fire access, such as on the north roof slope to allow entry if there is a fire.
- Consider rooftop solar when getting a new roof. Have a feasibility study completed for both.

### **Solar Resources**

Here are some solar resources that *may* be helpful in researching and learning more about solar:

- Wisconsin State Statute 66.0401. According to Wisconsin State law 66.0401, local governments may not place any restriction on the installation or use of solar or wind energy systems unless the restriction:
  - Serves to preserve or protect public health or safety
  - Does not significantly increase system cost or significantly decrease efficiency
  - Allows for an alternative system of comparable cost and efficiency
- Grow Solar. Grow Solar is a coordinated effort among Midwest organizations and municipalities to build an open and advantageous solar market that provides long-term benefits to communities.  
<https://www.growsolar.org/>