

SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) INSTALLATIONS

The checklist below contains the minimum information and project plan details required to be submitted when applying for a City permit to install a residential or commercial (non-residential) rooftop or ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) system. For solar info and FAQs, refer to the City's [Solar Landing Page](#).

I. REQUIRED PERMITS & APPROVALS

- A. Building Permits are required for all solar installations, rooftop or ground-mounted, prior to the start of work, including: Residential Solar PV Systems, Commercial (non-residential) Solar PV Systems, Solar PV System Plus Technologies (including battery storage), and Primary Use Ground-mounted Solar PV Systems. Best practice is to apply for the building permit first, then the electrical permit. There is a step-by-step building permit guide [here](#).
- B. Zoning approvals are made concurrently in the building permitting process. Some local historic district guidelines may cause additional review regarding locational approval. You can assess if you are in a local historic district by visiting [OpenCincy](#), [CAGIS](#), or contacting the Permit Center at (513) 352-3230.
- C. Electrical Permits are required and issued by Inspection Bureau, Inc. (also known as IBI): <https://www.inspectionbureau.com/>

II. WHAT CODES/REGULATIONS ARE APPLICABLE?

All work performed must be in accordance with the Cincinnati Zoning Code, the Cincinnati Building Code, and all other applicable laws and ordinances. For 1, 2, and 3 dwelling structures, the [current](#) Residential Code of Ohio (RCO) applies, while the [current](#) Ohio Basic Code (OBC) applies for all other structures.

III. HOW DO I OBTAIN A PERMIT?

- A. Submit Permit Application
Application instructions, including requirements for Electronic Document Submission, can be found [here](#).
- B. Review Process Timeline
The City of Cincinnati is committed to providing a timely review of solar PV permit applications. Best efforts are made to review completed residential solar permit applications within 5 business days and commercial/non-residential solar permit applications within 10 business days. These turnaround times are typical, not guaranteed. Additionally, the Permit Center offers Same-Day review for in-person application submissions for almost all residential solar projects and some commercial solar projects. Details for Same-Day Review are provided [here](#). Incomplete submissions may require a revision. Revision reviews typically are completed within 5 business days.
- C. Plot Plan (Ground mounted Only) - Drawn to scale showing:
 - 1. Property lines (and property dimensions)
 - 2. All existing and proposed structures
 - 3. Distance from the house to the proposed ground mounted solar installation
 - 4. North arrow
 - 5. Distance from the property line to the ground mounted solar installation. (Typically, any accessory structure is only allowed in the rear yard and a minimum of 3 feet from any property line per the Cincinnati Zoning Code. Reach out to ZoningInfo@cincinnati.oh.gov with questions regarding zoning for a particular property.

D. Proposed System Plan

1. System plans for roof mounted solar must illustrate the required minimum clearances and provide signed and stamped documentation that the structure can support the weight from an Ohio-licensed design professional.

E. Electrical Diagram (from licensed professional at both permit submissions)

1. Electrical diagram/worksheets should show PV and energy storage system configuration, wiring system, overcurrent protection, inverter, disconnects, required signs, and AC connection to the building.

F. Specification sheets and installation manuals

1. Provide spec sheets and manuals for all manufactured components including, but not limited to, PV modules, inverter(s), combiner box, disconnects, and mounting system.

IV. CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS

Building Permits must designate a Cincinnati Registered Contractor prior to the issuance.

Electrical Permits must designate a Cincinnati Registered/Ohio Licensed Electrical Contractor prior to issuance.

Contractor Registration Information provided [here](#). List of currently registered contractors provided [here](#).

V. PERMIT FEES

Building Permit fees are calculated based on the cost of the proposed project. Current Building Permit Fees are listed [here](#). The link also provides a permit calculator at the Open Cincy button; choose either residential or business portal for estimating the project fees.

VI. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I APPLY FOR MY PERMIT?

The aforementioned agencies will review the application. If any of the agencies have questions or comments, they will contact the person listed on the application. Upon receipt of the necessary plan revisions and approvals, the Permit Center will notify the applicant that the permit is ready and the balance of the permit fee will be due. Contact the Permit Center at (513) 352-3271.

A Condition on the Permit (Building Permit) will require the applicant to seek an Electrical Permit from our third-party provider, Inspection Bureau, Inc. (IBI). <https://www.inspectionbureau.com/>. Certificates of Completion for the Building Permit are issued only after Electrical Permits are issued and certified complete.

VII. WHAT IS MY PERMIT STATUS - To check your permit status, use [CAGIS Activity Report](#)

VIII. WHAT IS REQUIRED AFTER THE PERMIT IS ISSUED?

All work must be performed in accordance with the approved plans, the Cincinnati Zoning Code, Cincinnati Building Codes, Ohio Basic Building Code, National Electric Code, and other applicable ordinances. The permit will expire if work is not started, is postponed, abandoned, or an inspection is not requested within one year of the issue date. Inspections are required for the completed work (see below). The Electrical Permit must be issued and certified complete prior to the Building Inspector finalizing the Building Permit and issuing a Certificate of Completion.

IX. INSPECTIONS REQUIRED (24-hour minimum notice to inspector)

Contact your designated Inspector (identified on your permit) by email or phone to schedule your building inspection. If not responded to promptly, contact Building Construction Inspections at (513) 352-3267.

- Location Inspection (ground mounted only)
- Electrical – Final Inspection
- Building Permit – Final Inspection, after confirmation of Electrical Final Inspection on record.