



RESOURCES

- [Interactive Zoning Map](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/zoningmap) - www.grandrapidsmi.gov/zoningmap
- [Development Center](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/devcenter) - www.grandrapidsmi.gov/devcenter
- [Apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Apply-for-a-Certificate-of-Appropriateness-for-an-Existing-Structure) - www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Apply-for-a-Certificate-of-Appropriateness-for-an-Existing-Structure
- [Apply for a Building Permit](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Apply-for-a-Residential-Building-Permit) - www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Apply-for-a-Residential-Building-Permit
- [Apply for an Electrical Permit](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Apply-for-an-Electrical-Permit) - www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Apply-for-an-Electrical-Permit
- [Apply for a Mechanical Permit](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Apply-for-a-Mechanical-Permit) - www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Apply-for-a-Mechanical-Permit
- [Schedule an Inspection](http://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Schedule-an-Inspection-of-Permitted-Work) - www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Schedule-an-Inspection-of-Permitted-Work

CONTACT US



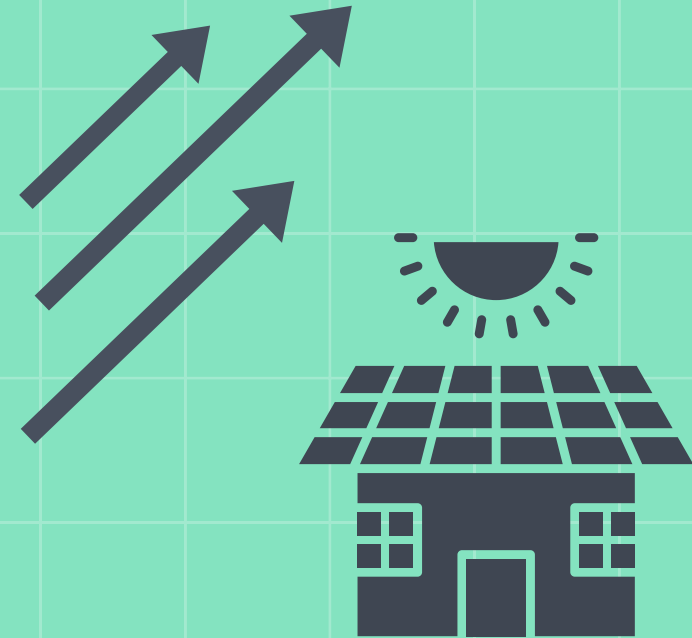
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CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Solar Power Guide



PERMITS REQUIRED FOR SOLAR
PANEL INSTALLATION AND USE

[GRANDRAPIDSMI.GOV/
SOLAR-POWER](http://GRANDRAPIDSMI.GOV/SOLAR-POWER)



OVERVIEW

Thank you for your interest in improving your property to help build a more sustainable Grand Rapids! This guide explains the permitting process and project details required to install a solar energy system. This information pertains to both residential homes and small commercial structures.

REQUIRED PERMITS

The permits you will need vary based on these factors:

- **Location of your home**
- **Type of system**
- **Proposed placement of the panels**

Please don't hesitate to contact the Development Center directly if you have questions about your project.

HISTORIC DISTRICT

Solar energy systems are permitted as an accessory use in all Zone Districts. However, If your home is located in a historic district, you will need to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) through the Historic Preservation Commission. The HPC reviews proposed installations of solar energy systems to ensure their compatibility with existing neighborhood characteristics.



Find out if you're in a historic district

Our online interactive zoning map can help you find out if your home is in a historic district. Visit grandrapidsmi.gov/zoningmap.

TYPE OF SYSTEM

Solar panels gather energy through two types of systems:



ELECTRICAL PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) SYSTEM

If you are proposing a PV system, you'll need to apply for an electrical permit. A licensed electrical contractor typically applies for the permit.

HOT WATER SYSTEM

If you are proposing a hot water system, you'll need to apply for a mechanical permit. A licensed mechanical contractor typically applies for the permit.



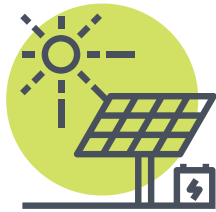
PANEL LOCATION

Solar panels may be mounted to the roof of a primary residence or accessory structure or installed on the ground with appropriate screening. The placement of your solar panels will determine the permit requirements.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

You'll need to submit the following with all permit applications:

- A dimensioned site layout drawing or plan (overhead view) of the property, including property lines, structures, key features, and proposed location of the panels.
- Specification sheet(s) and installation manual(s) for all manufactured components. For PV systems, these include, but are not limited to PV modules, inverters, combiner box, disconnects, and mounting system.



GROUND PANELS

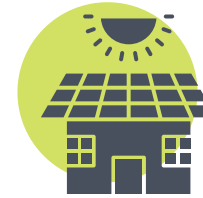
BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- Can be installed to the side or rear of main building but not within 5 feet of a side or rear property line.
- Adequate screening with plantings or another material is required.

PERMITS NEEDED

- Electrical or Mechanical Permit (Depending on type of system)

ROOF-MOUNTED PANELS



BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- Panels may not extend more than two feet above structure height
- Panels may not project beyond eaves of the roof
- Panels are integrated, to the extent possible, with the architectural character of the building or structure on which the equipment is affixed.

PERMITS NEEDED

- Residential or Commercial Building Permit
- Electrical or Mechanical Permit (Depending on type of system)

STREET-FACING RESTRICTION

Street-facing, roof-mounted panels are permitted on south-facing roof exposures. Other street-facing exposures may be allowed through an Administrative Departure process, which involves an additional application form and fee.

BUILDING PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Please submit the following with your Building Permit application:

- If the slope of the panels will not match the slope of the roof, submit a dimensioned elevation drawing or plan (side view).
- Documentation that the roof structure is adequate to support the panels. This documentation must list the site address and proposed equipment type.
 - Residential Structure: Can submit a signed statement from the professional installer or the documentation listed below for commercial structures.
 - Commercial Structure: Must submit either a structural plan or engineering report stamped/sealed by a licensed professional engineer.

PERMITTING, REVIEWS & INSPECTIONS

CAN A HOMEOWNER APPLY FOR PERMITS?

PERMIT & PLAN REVIEW

The Development Center is committed to providing timely review of solar energy applications.

- In-person applications: Reviewed over the counter
- Online applications (residential): Reviewed in 3 days or less
- Online applications (commercial): Reviewed in 5 days or less

An incomplete application will prolong the review time, so please be sure to submit all required drawings/plans and supporting documents.

While a homeowner may apply for an electrical or mechanical permit, a licensed contractor is **strongly recommended** for solar installations.

INSPECTIONS

Each of the associated mechanical, electrical, and building permits will require inspections prior to use. To schedule these inspections, please call 616-456-4100 (option 1). Inspections typically can be performed within 2-3 days of the request. Please note that the mechanical and electrical inspections will need to be completed prior to the building inspection being scheduled.