



Department of Inspection and Standards

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Checklist for Solar Photovoltaic Installation

1 - Interconnection

Apply for interconnection through National Grid during the conception phase of your project, even for small solar PV projects. See information about the interconnection process and documentation needed [here](#).

2 - Permitting

Apply for building and electrical permits through the [Online Portal](#) for the Providence Department of Inspection and Standards (DIS). See the Permitting Considerations on Page 2 of this document to determine if additional review is necessary.

- 1) Go to Providence DIS' [online portal](#) and create an account.
- 2) Fill out the Building Permit application:
 - a. Documents needed:
 - i. Two sets of engineer stamped building plans
 - ii. A letter from an RI registered engineer addressing roof loading
- 3) Fill out the Electrical Permit application:
 - a. Documents needed:
 - i. Engineer stamped electrical plans
- 4) Commercial projects (including residences that are 4+ family dwellings) need a Providence Fire Marshal review. Submit the plan review application and initial plans to the Plan Review Unit at 444 Westminster Street. The office is open Monday through Friday 8:30am-4:00pm.
- 5) Commercial projects also need to submit a completed 128 Project Certification Form through the Providence online portal.

You can also visit the Department of Inspection and Standards (DIS) in person at 444 Westminster Street, Monday to Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm.

3 - Inspection

Once your permits have been issued, request an inspection from DIS through the online portal, by filling out [this form](#), or by calling (401)680-5355.

- 1) All solar PV systems require a rough and final electrical inspection and a building inspection. For residential installations, only these three inspections are needed.
 - a. The rough electrical and building inspections should occur after the racking/mounting system is installed and before the panels are installed.
 - b. The final electrical inspection should occur once the panels are structurally fastened to the roof.
- 2) For commercial installations, a fire inspection is also needed. This occurs after the panels are structurally fastened to the roof.
 - a. Contact the Fire Department to schedule the fire inspection (401)243-6050.

Permitting Considerations

Zoning Conformance: Solar is allowed by right as an accessory in all districts, but plans for solar in historic districts or the downtown district need additional review. Find the of the property zone using [this tool](#).

- If the property is in a historic district, contact Jason Martin at jmartin@providenceri.gov or (401)680-8517 to discuss the project, or find more information on the Historic District Commission's (HDC's) [webpage](#), including the HDC's [guidelines](#) for solar panel installations.
- If your property is in the Downtown District (D1), contact the Downtown Design Review Committee (DDRC) at (401)680-8521.
- If needed, apply for a Special Use or Variance from the [Zoning Board of Review](#).
- To find more information on Solar Energy System (Accessory Use), see Article 1302 Q of the [Providence Zoning Ordinance](#).
- If you have any questions about the Zoning Ordinances, contact the Zoning Official; Jeffrey L. Lykins at the Department of Inspection and Standards at (401)680-5777.

Permitting Fees

- The cost of building and electrical permits depends on the cost of your project.
- Use DIS' [Permit Calculator](#) to find the cost of permits for your project.
- If the project has a construction cost exceeding \$50,000.00, DIS requests 1/3 of the permit fee at the time of application, with balance due at time of issuance.

Time Expectations

- Expedited review of 15 business days is available for commercial projects that qualify.
- Regular review takes place within 30 business days.
- Residential solar permits are often issued on the same day the application is submitted.
- In 2016, 54% of building permits for solar energy systems were issued on the same day, 61% were issued within 3 days, and 78% were issued within a week. Electrical permits for solar systems mostly had a single day turnaround, with 93% issued on the same day.