



Solar Photovoltaic (PV) System Permitting Checklist

The pre-submittal checklist below contains the minimum information and project plan details required to be submitted to the City of Columbia Heights when applying for a permit to install a residential or commercial/non-residential solar photovoltaic (PV) system.

Commented [ZW1]: Include all relevant information for small rooftop solar PV systems in this checklist. Optional to include relevant information for small ground mounted and/or commercial/non-residential solar PV systems.

Codes and Design Criteria

The City of Columbia Heights has adopted the following codes: 2020 Minnesota Residential Code, 2020 Minnesota Building Code, 2024 Minnesota Commercial Energy Code, 2020 Minnesota Accessibility Code, 2020 Minnesota Mechanical and Fuel Gas Code, 2020 Minnesota Plumbing Code, 2020 Minnesota Conservation Code for Existing Buildings, 2020 Minnesota Fire Code, Minnesota Electrical Code.

The following local design criteria should be used: max wind speed 115mph, ground snow load is 50psf, frost depth is 42", maximum assumable soil bearing capacity can vary from location to location. In the absence of soil data we use 2500psf.

Required Permits

A permit must be obtained prior to the start of any work. Complete the following permit application form(s) and submit any additional required documents. We require engineering for all solar installations. This is mainly because of the nature of our housing stock.

Commented [ZW2]: Criteria PI-9 if only 1 permit is required for small rooftop solar PV. Criteria PI-7 if a standard PV permit is used.

Residential Solar PV System:

- Electrical Permit
Building Permit

Commercial/non-residential Solar PV System:

- Electrical Permit
Building Permit

Solar PV System Plus Technologies:

- Electrical Permit
Building Permit

Primary Use Ground-mounted Solar PV System:

- Electrical Permit
Building Permit

Commented [ZW3]: Optional information to include.

Commented [ZW4]: Optional information to include.

Commented [ZW5]: Optional information to include.

Commented [ZW6]: Criteria PI-17 if the community chooses to include details on the required permit(s), submittals, and steps of your community's permitting process for primary use ground mount solar.

Commented [ZW7]: Edit the following information as necessary. Please make a note which, if any, documents need to be engineer stamped, how many copies of the documents are needed, and what other additional documents are required for a completed permit application.

Additional Required Documents

- Site Plan
- Site plan should show the location of major components on the property. The site plan drawing need not be exactly to scale, but it should represent relative location of components at site (see supplied example site plan).
- Roof access, pathways and spacing requirements do not be provided as our fire department does not deploy rooftop operations.
Electrical Diagram

Commented [ZW8R7]: If applicable, please be sure to differentiate what information is required for Residential Solar PV Systems vs the optional system types the community chooses to include details on.

- Electrical permits are issued through the MN Department of Labor and Industry.
- ☐ Specification sheets and installation manuals (if available)
- Provide spec sheets and manuals for all manufactured components including, but not limited to, PV modules, inverter(s), combiner box, disconnects, and mounting system

Contractor Requirements

[If applicable, indicate any certifications and/or registrations that are required.]

Permit Fees

Permit fees are valuation based on a sliding scale. For a \$20,000 residential installation the permit fee would be \$422, plan review would be \$274.30, and a state surcharge of \$10

Complete fee information can be found in [chapter, section, etc.] of the [community name] Code of Ordinances or in the [fee schedule ← link to fee schedule].

Submit Permit Application

Permits may be submitted in person, online, or via mail. Online is likely the easiest option.

Review Process Timeline

The Building Safety Department is committed to providing a timely review of solar PV permit applications. Best efforts are made to review completed residential solar permit applications within 7 business days and commercial/non-residential solar permit applications within 7 business days. These turnaround times are typical, not guaranteed. Columbia Heights has a staff of dedicated individuals, but workloads, vacations, and sick leave can cause unforeseen delays that may impact turnaround time.

Certain circumstances can prolong the permit turnaround time including:

- Applicant does not submit all required information
- Contractor applying for permit is not a licensed contractor
- Equipment is not listed

Permit Status

To check your permit status please 763-706-3670

Permit Expiration

All permits expire six (6) months after date of issue. Failure to start the work authorized by a permit within this six-month period renders the permit invalid and a new permit must be obtained. Once work begins, noticeable progress must continue until completion. All work must be complete within eighteen (18) months of a permit issue date.

Scheduling an Inspection and the Inspection Process

To schedule an inspection please call 763-706-3670. Typically, inspections are completed within 3 days. Inspections are scheduled for a specific time.

A residential solar PV system typically requires one inspection unless roof modifications are needed.

- Framing (for roof modifications only)
- Final building inspection after the state electrical inspection has been completed.

Review solar PV system inspection requirements [here](#).

Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact us at:

Commented [ZW9]: Criteria PI-12 if community exempts or waives fees for residential PV
Criteria PI-13 if community exempts or waives fees for residential PV for LMI customers
Criteria PI-14 if residential fees are less than \$500.
Criteria PI-15 if commercial/non-residential fees are reasonable and not a revenue source.

Commented [ZW10]: If applicable information is found in the Code of Ordinances you can link to that information here.

Commented [ZW11]: Criteria PI-10 if solar PV permits and plans can be submitted and approved online.

Commented [ZW12]: Criteria PI-4 if the turnaround time is less than 3 business days for residential solar permits.

Commented [ZW13]: Edit as necessary.

Commented [ZW14]: Please add information about how an applicant can check on their permit status.

Commented [ZW15]: Edit as necessary.

Commented [ZW16]: Criteria PI-20 if appointment times are offered in lieu of appointment windows.

Criteria PI-21 if an inspection can be scheduled online or via email.

Commented [ZW17]: Criteria PI-19 if the number of inspections is no more than 1.

Commented [ZW18]: Criteria PI-18 if inspection requirements are posted online.

Link to inspection requirements.

Commented [ZW19]: Edit as necessary.

- Inspections@columbiaheightsmn.gov
- Office Phone Number: 763-706-3670

Address:

Hours of Operation

- Office: Mon - Fri 8 am to 4:30 pm
- Permit Counter: Mon - Fri from 8 am to 4:30 pm

