

## **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. The intent of using the checklist is to provide transparent and well-defined information to minimize the number of required revisions, improve permit application quality, and accelerate the application and review process.

### **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.

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

### **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

- 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**

A new law effective July 1, 2023, requires companies that contract with residential homeowners to install solar photovoltaic (PV) systems on homes in Minnesota be licensed as a residential building contractor or remodeler.

**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. For more information, please contact the Community Development Department at 763-706-3670.

**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 call 763-706-3670

**Permit Expiration**

All permits expire 180 days 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.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions, please contact us at:

- [Inspections@columbiaheightsmn.gov](mailto: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