

Solar photovoltaic (PV) installations

Licensing, scope of work and permits

The use of solar energy as a renewable energy source is growing more popular in Oregon. Not only are residential homeowners taking advantage of the power of the sun, but solar energy systems are being developed in the eastern and southern regions of the state that can supply power to Oregon's electrical grid.

Individuals or companies installing solar photovoltaic (PV) systems in the state need to be aware of specific requirements regarding licensure and scope of work that are identified in the Oregon Building Code.

System types

Solar PV systems use cells, typically in the form of panels, to convert energy from sunlight into electricity.

- Roof-top solar PV systems are used to supplement energy use in residential and commercial structures. Energy from these systems generates electricity.
- Utility-scale solar PV systems are built to supply power to a utility's electrical grid. These systems are often referred to as solar parks, farms, or ranches.

Licenses required

The State of Oregon requires contractors and other individuals who install solar PV in state to be licensed. Licenses required depend on the size of installation.

Contractor License – An individual or business seeking to install solar PV must first obtain an electrical contractor license before “engaging in the business” of installing solar PV. Engaging in the business includes activities such as performing an electrical installation or designing a system.

Individual License – An individual installing a solar PV system must be licensed as a general journeyman electrician, general supervising electrician, or limited residential electrician. For solar PV systems smaller than 25kW, the individual may be licensed as a limited renewable energy technician.

Scope of work

All individuals working on a solar installation must work on behalf of an individual or business with an electrical contractor license. This applies to both residential and commercial installations.

No individual license is required to install a “racking” system (i.e., roof- or ground-mounted structure on which solar PV panels is attached). However, an individual license is required to attach any electrical equipment, including panels, wiring, and inverters, to the racking system or any other structure.

Permits required

An electrical permit is required for any solar installation. Some installations may require a structural permit for plan review. Check with your local building department or the Oregon Building Codes Division.

For more information, please visit our website to contact a building code specialist:

<https://www.oregon.gov/bcd/codes-stand/Pages/code-program-contacts.aspx>

