

SOLAR PANELS INFORMATION SHEETResidential and Commercial Building Permits

Is a building permit required for to install solar panels?

Yes, a building permit is required to install solar panels on roof or wall structures.

Why do I need a building permit?

Residential and commercial roofs are typically built to withstand the National Building Code of Canada's required minimum live and dead loads for snow, rain and wind in their climatic zones. The weight of solar panels, even if mounted flush with the roof, imposes additional loading on the roof structure. Thus roofs may need to be upgraded to support the additional weight of solar panels.

Residential and commercial walls are typically built to withstand the standard loading such as wind pressure, sheathing, cladding and interior finishes. Thus, if solar panels are mounted on walls, walls may need to be upgraded to support the additional weight of panels.

Why do I need a professional design for the supporting structure?

Roof structures are designed typically to support snow, rain and wind loads. The additional weight of solar panels will require a design professional to evaluate the new loads imposed on the existing roof structure.

What documents are required to be submitted to apply for a building permit?

Engineered drawings that are signed and sealed by a design professional licensed to practice in the province of Saskatchewan, a commitment letter for field review and eventually a letter of assurance before permit closure are required to be submitted identifying any upgrades to the roof structure. These drawings should indicate that the design professional has designed for weight of the panel and snow, rain and wind loads.

Alternatively, a signed and sealed letter from a structural engineer stating that the current roof structure is sufficient to support the weight of the panel in addition to snow, rain and wind loads will also be accepted.

The documents mentioned above are required in addition to the building and development permit application and supporting documents.

How much will the building permit cost? How is the fee evaluated?

Permit fees for installation of solar panels are calculated based on construction value for the structural upgrades. For example if the panels and installation equipment cost \$20,000 and the engineering fees and roof upgrades are \$5000, then the building permit fees will be calculated from the \$5000 only, as opposed to \$25,000. If no upgrades to the roofs are necessary, the minimum building permit fee will apply.

The development permit fees, if applicable, still apply and is based on total construction value.

Can my solar panels be installed on the ground in my backyard?

Yes, solar panels can be installed on the ground. Mounting and support of panels will need to follow the manufacturer's recommendations and applicable CSA certifications. The location of panels are required to follow the City of Saskatoon Zoning Bylaw # 8770.

What other permits do I require?

Solar panels will require electrical permits which can be obtained from your power utility company. Please contact Saskatoon Light and Power or SaskPower, depending on your service provider, for more information.