



Residential Solar Ready Guidelines

New Construction Only

The following information provides guidance to applicants and reviewers in determining compliance with residential Solar Ready code.

Project Determination

Does the proposed solar zone or zones have the required orientation?

One and two-family dwellings and Townhomes:

The total solar area may be comprised of one or two zones, both having an orientation between 300° clockwise to 90° of true north.

Multifamily:

There is no required orientation for the solar zone or zones on multifamily buildings.

Does the proposed solar zone or zones have the required minimum area?

One and two-family dwellings:

The total solar-ready zone area shall be not less than 240 square feet per dwelling unit with at least one of the zones not less than 100 square feet, exclusive of access or setback required by the Fire Code. The solar-ready zone must be not less than six feet on a side.

Townhomes:

The total solar-ready zone area shall be not less than 160 square feet with at least one of the zones not less than 100 square feet, exclusive of access or setback required by the Fire Code. The solar-ready zone must be not less than six feet on a side.

Multifamily (new construction four levels or fewer above grade):

The total solar-ready zone area(s) shall in aggregate be not less than 35 percent of the total roof area of the building.

Is the proposed solar zone or zones free from penetrations or obstructions?

The proposed solar zone should be free of penetrations or obstructions. Care should be taken to avoid obstructions such as chimneys and flues that are outside of the zone but would shade the solar array(s).

Is the proposed solar zone or zones identified on the building plans?

The solar zone(s) should be outlined on the roof plans and identified, with true North also identified (for one- and two family dwellings and townhomes).

Exceptions

One- and two-family dwellings with less than 800 square feet of roof per dwelling unit and townhomes with less than 600 square feet of roof area per dwelling unit.

Designers are encouraged to include some solar-ready area on dwellings with a smaller roof area or where a portion of the roof is shaded.

A building with a Solar-Ready Zone that is shaded by trees or adjacent structures for more than 50% of annual daylight hours.

A building site where the applicant has demonstrated the existence of a unique hardship preventing compliance.

Those seeking an exception due to roof shading or hardship with respect to the site should provide evidence to support the exception. Examples of physical site constraints would include a lot that requires much of the roof area to face in a northerly direction, design guidelines that require a roof shape that would preclude the installation of solar, or a lot that dictates the design of the building so as to preclude the installation of solar.

A new residential building with permanently installed renewable energy system with an output of not less than one watt per square foot of conditioned floor space or at least two kilowatts.

A contract with a renewable energy installation contractor or a letter of intent for the purpose of applying for a solar PV rebate from Austin energy should be provided to qualify for this exception.

Granting of an exception is specific to a particular project, and should not be considered as establishing precedent for any subsequent projects seeking the same or similar exception.