



Edmonds Development Services Department

ONLINE SOLAR PERMITTING

City of Edmonds

- City of ~40,000
- A record 1,443 building permits in 2015
- Existing website, maintained by City staff
- Existing permit tracking system
 - Annual maintenance ~\$16,000/year
 - Includes customized enhancements & assistance
- Permit system and other permit-related technologies supported by \$25 “technology fee” applied to every building permit

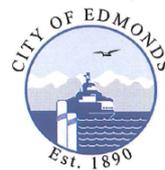
First Steps:

Focus on Internal Processes

- Joined DOE's Pacific NW Solar Partnership with four other jurisdictions in 2012-2013
- Initiated review of solar permitting in the city
- Little experience with solar permitting, but it was evident that improvements could be made

Initial Improvements

- Checklist for eligible streamlined permitting
- Flat fee for residential installations
- Reduced cost for commercial projects
 - Removed value of panels & inverters from project valuation for calculating fees
- Created exception from height limits in zoning code



Building Department Operational Policy

Title: Solar Permit Fees

Date: 11/16/12

Policy # : 111612

Issue: A building permit is required for the installation of solar photovoltaic systems. In order to keep costs low and affordable for both commercial and residential installations, the City needs to establish reasonable and standardized fees for these permits.

Policy: Fees for solar permits shall be determined using the following methods:

For Single Family homes, a flat fee of \$135 (2 hours at \$60 plus a surcharge fee of \$15) shall be charged for simple photovoltaic system permits.

For Commercial/Multifamily, the fee is based on valuation. An itemized valuation is to be provided by the applicant and shall show breakout costs of the solar panels and inverters. The valuation used to determine the fee will be the total valuation less the costs of the panels and inverters.

Moving Permitting Online

- Online solar permitting began to be implemented during 2013 using:
 - Existing website
 - Existing permitting software
- In our case, no additional cost to implement; this “enhancement” was covered in the annual maintenance contract for the permit system

Online Permitting

- Link from City website to online permit portal, which links to City's internal permitting system
- Permitting system and public portal both provided by Bitco Software's PermitTrax software



The screenshot displays the City of Edmonds Washington website. The header features the city logo, a search bar, and social media icons for EdTV, Twitter, and Facebook. A navigation menu includes links for Home, Government, Services, Doing Business, I Want To..., Visit Edmonds, and Calendars. The main content area is titled "General Permit Assistance" and includes a breadcrumb trail: "You are here: Home > General Permit Assistance". A left sidebar lists various permit assistance topics: Permit Assistance, General Permit Assistance, Online Permit Info, Informational Handouts, Applications | Forms, Development Fees, Codes and Standards, and Construction & Inspections. The main content area features a photograph of three staff members (two men and one woman) standing behind a counter with a large bouquet of flowers. To the right, there is a "Permitting Contacts" section providing the address, phone, fax, and hours for the Development Services Department.

City of Edmonds Washington

EdTV  

Search...

Home ▾ Government ▾ Services ▾ Doing Business ▾ I Want To... ▾ Visit Edmonds Calendars ▾

You are here: Home > General Permit Assistance

Permit Assistance

- General Permit Assistance
- Online Permit Info
- Informational Handouts
- Applications | Forms
- Development Fees
- + Codes and Standards
- Construction & Inspections

General Permit Assistance



Permitting Contacts

Development Services Department
121 5th Ave N
Edmonds, WA 98020
Phone: 425-771 0220
Fax: 425-771 0221

Hours:
M, T, Th, F: 8am to 4:30pm
CLOSED ALL DAY ON WEDNESDAYS
(Appointments only.)
The switchboard is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. 425.771.0220

Contacts:
Building Division
Planning Division
Engineering Development Staff

Basic Solar Permitting Information Provided On Website



You are here: [Home](#) ▾ ▾ [Rooftop Solar Installations](#)

Permit Assistance

General Permit Assistance

Online Permit Info

Informational Handouts

Applications | Forms

Development Fees

+ Codes and Standards

Construction & Inspections

Green Development

GIS Web Map

Frequently Asked Questions

Development Services HOME

Rooftop Solar Installations

A building permit is required for the installation or replacement of solar/photovoltaic (PV) systems, including rooftop arrays, ground-mounted arrays and PV water heaters. An electrical permit is required from the State Department of Labor & Industries.

Single family residential rooftop installations meeting the criteria in a regionally developed checklist are eligible to obtain a building permit online through the city's website or over-the-counter at the permit center in City Hall. The checklist can be completed through the City's [online permit system](#), or it can be downloaded here as a fillable-PDF file which you can mail in or bring to the Development Services permit counter at City Hall (121 5th Ave N).

Edmonds is a [Northwest Solar Community](#), working to promote solar energy and bring down the soft costs associated with installing rooftop solar electricity. Working under a Department of Energy's Rooftop Solar Challenge grant program, this nationwide effort engaged diverse teams of local and state governments along with utilities, installers, non-governmental organizations, and others to make solar energy more accessible and affordable. As part of this project, the Cities of Bellevue, Edmonds, Seattle and Ellensburg worked with internal departments and industry stakeholders to develop a streamlined, expedited permitting process for rooftop mounted, residential solar PV systems.

- [View/download the solar checklist](#)
- [Apply online for a Simple Rooftop PV Permit](#)

Contact: [Leif Bjorback](#), Building Official

Helpful links

- [Edmonds Solar Handout #B74](#)
- [Snohomish PUD "Solar Express"](#)
- [Sustainable Edmonds](#)
- [Northwest Solar Communities](#)
- www.solarabcs.org/permitting



Resources plus quick links to get people started

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CITY OF EDMONDS
ONLINE PERMIT INFORMATION

Development Services
425-771-0220

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Development Services Department Online Permit Information

Welcome to the Development Services Department online permit information system. You may use this system to view the status of current and past permits. If you have any questions please call (425) 771-0220.

Additional Information

- [View The City Of Edmonds Website](#)
- [Visit Our Development Services Website](#)

Search For



Inspections



[Request Inspection](#) [View Scheduled Inspections](#)

Once registered you may login and request an inspection for your permits.

Apply Online for Permit



[Click To Apply Online](#)

[How To Apply!](#)

Apply for a permit online. Simple permits that do not require a formal review process can be easily applied and paid for online.

Please Note: Only Single Family Plumbing, Mechanical, Re-Roof Permits and Critical Areas are available for purchase online. Residential Solar/Photovoltaic are now available online.

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New Permit

To apply, select a permit type from the list below and click Apply for Permit.

[Critical Area Online Permit](#)

- Critical Area Checklist to determine whether any potential Critical Areas are, or may be, present on and/or adjacent to the subject property.

[Plumbing/Mechanical](#)

- Online Plumbing/Mechanical permits are limited to single family dwellings except for domestic-style water heaters in a commercial building.
- Online plumbing permits are limited to gas and electric water heaters, gas piping, repair of water service line and repair or replacement of water or waste piping within the house. This does not include installation of hydronic systems.
- Online mechanical permits are limited to gas and electric furnaces, heat pumps, AC units, gas fireplaces and single duct exhaust fans.

[Rooftop Solar/Photovoltaic](#)

- Simple rooftop PV systems that meet the criteria within the "Expedited Permitting Checklist" may be permitted via this online portal. The checklist was designed to allow most simple installations to obtain a building permit without a formal city plan review.
- Electrical permits and inspections will be required from [State Labor And Industries](#).



ONLINE SOLAR / PHOTOVOLTAIC REQUIREMENTS

EXPEDITED PERMITTING CHECKLIST FOR RESIDENTIAL PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS: ROOFTOP MOUNTED

The following questions will determine if your project is eligible for an online or over-the-counter permit.

If you answer yes to all of the below questions, your PV installation is eligible for an online or OTC building permit.

Online Solar Requirements

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 1) PV System is designed and proposed for a detached single-family house? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 8) Supports for solar panels are installed to spread the dead load across as many roof-framing members as needed to ensure that no point loads in excess of fifty (50) pounds are created. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 2) PV system is designed for rooftop of a house in general compliance with applicable codes? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 9) Attachment to the roof is specified by the mounting system manufacturer. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 3) Mounting system is engineered and designed for PV? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 10) One of the following fire safety features will be implemented
If YES, indicate which:
<input type="checkbox"/> Dwelling fire sprinkler system installed in accordance with IFC 903.3.1.3.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> At least one 3' path is provided from roof gutter to ridge for firefighter access or the array does not occur on the approach side of fire apparatus access. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 4) Rooftop is made from lightweight material such as shingles? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 11) Home is code compliant to setbacks and height, or code allows expansion of nonconformity for solar panels. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 5) PV system will be permitted and pre-approved by labor and Industries Electrical Division? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 12) Panels are mounted no higher than the roof ridge or apex of roof (applies only to pitched roofs). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 6) To address uplift, panels are mounted no higher than 18" above the surface of the roofing to which they are affixed? Except for flat roofs, no portion of the system may exceed the highest point of the roof. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | 7) Total dead load of panels, supports, mountings, raceways, and all other appurtenances weigh no more than one of the following. If YES, indicate which:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No more than three and one-half (3.5) pounds per square foot (PSF)
<input type="checkbox"/> Frameless panels on at least 3/12 pitch roof weighing no more than four and one-half (4.5) PSF
<input type="checkbox"/> Frameless panels on at least 5/12 pitch roof weighing no more than five (5.0) PSF | | |

I certify that all of the information provided on this form is correct! YES



Continue

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ONLINE PERMIT INFORMATION

Development Services
425-771-0220

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ADDRESS

Please search for and select the address where the work will be completed.

Please check to make sure the site you are applying for is within the City limits of Edmonds. You may call us at (425) 771-0220 to confirm or visit the [Snohomish County Website Parcel Viewer](#).

Search for Address

Search for Address:

(example: 100 main)

	Number	Address	Dir	Unit	City
Select	121	5TH AVE	N		EDMONDS
Select	121	5TH AVE			EDMONDS



Property Owner

Please verify the property owner information and change any information that may be incorrect.

Choose a previously entered contact: PROP OWNER

Business Name:	<input type="text"/>
Last Name:	<input type="text" value="EDMONDS"/> *
First Name:	<input type="text" value="CITY OF"/> * MI: <input type="text"/>
Address:	<input type="text" value="250 5TH AVENUE N"/> *
Address:	<input type="text"/>
City:	<input type="text" value="EDMONDS"/> * State: <input type="text" value="Washington"/> * Zip: <input type="text" value="98020"/> *
Phone:	<input type="text"/> *
Alt Phone:	<input type="text"/>
Fax:	<input type="text"/>
E-Mail:	<input type="text"/>

ONLINE PERMIT INFORMATION

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CITY BUSINESS LICENSE INFO / WORK DESCRIPTION

Please fill in the items below. Items with RED shading are required fields. The City of Edmonds requires that a licensed contractor have a valid City Business License to conduct business within the limits of the city. If the property owner is to complete the work, please enter N/A in the City Business License field.

Online Solar

Contractor City Business License Number:
(Mark as "N/A" if owner is to do the work.)

How many Kilowatts does the system have?

Please Describe the Work to be Done:

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PERMIT FEES

The following is a list of the permit fees due for this project.

Once you click continue, you will be re-directed to the payment processing page. Once payment has been received you can visit Citizens Connect again and view the status of your permit application. Your permit application will be available to view at the bottom of the Citizens Connect Home page under the section My Permits.

Once this online permit application has been submitted to the city, you can expect a response within 2 business days. The city's development services department will review your application and if no other information is required, your permit will be ISSUED and work may start.

Please be sure to read the second page of the issued permit for permit conditions and required inspections.

Online permits expire 180 days after permit issuance and all inspection approvals must be granted before the permit expires.

Permit Fees - Step 1 of 3 of Payment Processing

Fee ID	Fee Description	Amount	Paid	Balance Due
200	X-Permit Surcharge Fee	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$25.00
215	SOLAR PERMIT FEE	\$120.00	\$0.00	\$120.00
				\$145.00



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Credit Card Information - Step 2 of 3 of Payment Processing

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION	
Card Number:	<input type="text"/>
Expires:	<input type="text" value="January"/> <input type="text" value="2016"/>
Name on Card:	<input type="text"/>
CVV2 Data: 	<input type="text"/>

CREDIT CARD BILLING ADDRESS	
Address:	<input type="text"/>
City:	<input type="text"/>
State:	<input type="text" value="Please select"/>
Zip:	<input type="text"/>
Phone:	<input type="text"/>



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System Implementation

- Worked directly with vendor
- Clearly developed and described processes
- Adapted NW Solar Communities checklist to online format for streamlined permitting
- Simple fee schedule (flat fee for residential)
- Linked with back-end internal permitting system: PermitTrax
(<http://www.bitcosoftware.com/>)
- Application, permit issuance, and status/tracking can be done online

Streamlined Permitting

- Residential permits that meet checklist criteria are typically approved and issued within one day
- Follow-up inspections by Building Inspector and Fire Marshall
- Results have been very good: easy to apply and approve, and inspections have not revealed any problems

Numbers tell the story: Online Permitting Success

Year	Total # of Permits	Applied Online	Applied in Person	% Online
2012	3	0	3	0%
2013	6	5	1	83%
2014	39	35	4	90%
2015	32	29	3	91%

...in combination with Improved Permit Processing

Year	Total # of Permits	Average Workdays to Issue	Standard Deviation
2012	3	26.0	16.0
2013	6	10.8	19.6
...			
2015	32	1.0	1.9

Lessons Learned

- Online permitting can greatly improve accessibility and ease of application
- Integration with internal permit tracking system is very important (essential!)
- If combined with process improvements can result in significant efficiencies and reduction in permit processing times





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THANK YOU!

