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Code Council Provides Access to New Guidebook that Makes Permit Review, Installation of Solar PV Systems in California Easier

Guidebook available as a free download or in print from the Code Council, addresses permitting requirements; assists installers and code officials

Fueled by an increasing trend toward sustainability, [solar photovoltaic systems](#) are more popular than ever, especially in California. There are still challenges, however, for those trying to install solar PV systems and navigate permitting procedures and requirements that vary by jurisdiction.

“A major source of the challenges associated with permitting of solar PV systems is the fact this is new and evolving technology and the current Building Code does not specifically address these systems,” said Osama Younan, PE, chief of the [Green Building Division](#), Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety. “This gap leaves it up to local jurisdictions to apply the code requirements as they see appropriate, which leads to inconsistencies.”

Younan added that inconsistencies and lack of information lead to delays which frustrate solar PV installers. To the rescue came the state of California, a world leader in renewable energy generation, with *The California Solar Permitting Guidebook* to assist code officials and installers. The guide focuses on the permit review and approval to install a solar PV system. It highlights solar PV installations on residential and

commercial building rooftops, in parking lots and on parking structures, and those mounted on the ground. Each of these has specific installation requirements addressed in the guide.

The California Solar Permitting Guidebook is available as a free download from the International Code Council at www.iccsafe.org/freeguidebook. Print copies of the guide are available from the ICC store at www.iccsafe.org/printedguidebook.

“Our California Members have expressed a need for support related to solar-powered installations,” said Dave Walls, Executive Director of ICC Sustainability Programs. “We are glad to once again work with the State of California and be able to provide a free download of the California Solar Permitting Guidebook to assist code officials and installers. The Code Council strongly supports safe and sustainable construction.”

Devised by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, the California Building Standards Commission, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Office of the State Fire Marshal and numerous other stakeholders, the 59-page guide is designed to specifically address confusion surrounding permitting requirements throughout the state of California for small solar photovoltaic installations and assist local government and its permitting agencies to enhance its processes.

“The guidebook provides local permitting agencies an easy-to-follow road map to improve their permit processes for small-scale solar installations,” said Wade Crowfoot, Deputy Director of the [Governor’s Office of Planning and Research](http://www.governor.ca.gov/office-of-planning-and-research). “It features several no-cost or low-cost steps that local agencies can take to improve their permitting. By improving permitting of solar installations, local governments improve constituent services, reduce the amount of staff time required to process permits, and make solar installations more affordable for local residents. In turn, more clean renewable energy is generated in California. We are hopeful that communities across the state, as well as solar contractors, will benefit from the guidebook.”

The guide is intended to help building owners and solar installers navigate permitting processes as seamlessly and efficiently as possible. The practices recommended apply to permitting agencies of all sizes. Even though the guidebook is a California publication, it can be beneficial to any jurisdiction.

The guide is organized into three parts:

- Current laws, regulations and codes: Explains current legal requirements for solar PV installations in California;
- The Project Approval Process: Explains important elements of permit review and project inspection; and
- Recommendations to improve local solar permitting: Outlines a streamlined permitting process for small PV systems and information that will help local governments clarify current laws for installations of all sizes.

“Electrical generation from renewable energy sources instead of using fossil fuel contributes towards reducing the carbon footprint,” Younan said. “Aside from the environmental benefits, the growing renewable energy industry is producing new jobs and economic opportunities.”

The [International Code Council](#) is a member-focused association dedicated to helping the building safety community and construction industry provide safe and sustainable construction through the development of codes and standards used in the design, build and compliance process. Most U.S. communities and many global markets [choose the International Codes](#).

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