

Solar Incentives and Permit Process Guide

The amount of sunlight we get is ideal for solar energy systems to produce clean power on most properties across King County. Federal, state, and local incentives help to both offset installation costs and reduce your monthly utility bills. One resource that helps you map your roof's solar savings potential is a solar calculator from Google found online at <https://sunroof.withgoogle.com/>.

What permits are required?

Project Description	Building/Fire Permits King County Permits	Electrical Permits Washington State Department of Labor & Industries	King County Permit Process
Residential – Single Family, Duplex, Townhouse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel dead load 4 psf or less, <u>and</u> Mounted no more than 18" above the roof 	No permit required	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and complete the Exempt Permit Checklist and keep for your records
Residential – Single Family, Duplex, Townhouse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel dead load exceeds 4 psf, <u>or</u> Mounted more than 18" above the roof 	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affidavit for Application Form Depending on project scope, drawings may include site plan, elevations, framing plans, and construction details. Manufacturer's specifications for how panels attach to the rooftop. Structural engineering calculations, as applicable. Fees: Check out the King County Permits Fee Guides Almost all solar projects require plan review. Initial plan review time will vary based on project complexity.
Residential – Multifamily, Nonresidential and Commercial	✓	✓	

Solar installation projects often involve other construction work such as the installation of a hot tub, commercial tenant improvement, or residential remodel. Additional work will likely require permits from one or more of the following agencies; please check with the applicable permitting agency for additional information.

- [King County Permits](#): Land Use, Clearing and Grading, Building (including private swimming pools), Fire, Natural Resources (Mines, Forestry and Agriculture)
- Seattle – King County Public Health – [Environmental Health Services](#): Plumbing and Gas Piping, On-site Septic and Wells, Public and Semi-public swimming pools, and hot tubs
- Washington State Department of Labor and Industries: [Electrical](#)

Financial Incentives Available

U.S. Internal Revenue Service [Personal Tax Credit Incentive](#)

Applies to: A solar energy system installed on your home or property

Personal Tax Credit Incentive: Claim this one-time credit on the costs associated with the installation of your solar energy system. The credit amount is based on the year your system was installed and providing service. In August 2022, Congress passed an extension federal tax credit, raising it to 30% for systems installed between 2022 – 2032.

Year of System installation	Rebate amount
2022-2032	30%
2033	26%
2034	22%

There is no maximum credit. Any amount exceeding the annual tax liability will not be refunded but may be carried forward to the next taxable year.

Program Expiration: The tax credit expires starting in 2035 unless Congress renews it.

Process: File [Tax Form 5695](#) with your tax return.

U.S. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (USDA) [Rural Energy for America Program](#)

Applies to: Energy upgrades, including the installation of new or replacement solar energy systems, to buildings in eligible rural areas being used for agricultural production or a rural small business.

Incentive Type: Loan financing and grant funding

- Loan guarantees on loans from \$5,000 to \$25 million, up to 75% of total eligible project costs
- Grants from \$2,500 to \$250,000, up to 25% of total eligible project costs
- Combined grant and loan guarantee funding up to 75% of total eligible project costs

Process: [Program Instructions](#)

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) [Net Metering Program](#)

For PSE customers, if your solar energy system is producing some or all your electricity needs, net metering will allow you to use that electricity any time, not just when it's generated. PSE will track when your excess energy produced is put back on the grid, and when the electricity you need is supplied by the utility.

Applies to: PSE customers with systems up to 100 kW of generating capacity

Program Benefits: Reduces your electricity bills. Reduces your carbon footprint. And it allows you to use your own clean energy source, without giving up the reliability of the PSE grid.

Process: [Apply here](#) to check out this opportunity! (Note, contractors installing systems may assist you with this application process.)

Questions: Contact a PSE Energy Advisor at 1-800-562-1482 or [PSE | Ask an Energy Advisor](#)

Financial Incentives Available (continued)

Seattle City Light [Net Metering Program](#)

For City Light customers, the Net Metering program provides kWh credits on your bill for the energy you produce. These credits are valued at your retail rate of electricity. Any solar energy generated that isn't immediately needed by your home goes back onto City Light's grid and is added to your account's net meter kWh credit balance, lowering future bills.

Applies to: City Light customers with systems up to 100 kW of generating capacity

Program Benefits: Reduces your electricity bills. Reduces your carbon footprint. And it allows you to use your own clean energy source, without giving up the reliability of the City Light power grid.

Process: Review and submit a [Level 1 Interconnection Agreement](#). (Note, contractors installing systems may assist you with this application process.)

Questions: Contact an [Energy Advisor](#)

Notable Land Use, Residential, Building, and Fire Code sections to check out

Below are common code sections which may apply to your solar energy system installation project. Your design professional will be able to provide a complete design analysis.

Zoning code requirements. The [King County Zoning Code](#) has maximum height, minimum setbacks, and maximum impervious surface requirements:

- Residential and rural zones: 21A.12.030
- Resource and commercial/industrial zones: 21A.12.040

International Residential Code (IRC) requirements with [King County](#) and Washington State amendments. The Residential Code will provide parameters on how a solar energy system needs to be safely and securely attached to your single family, duplex, or townhouse:

- See [Section R324](#) for general solar energy system requirements.

International Building Code (IBC) requirements with [King County](#) and Washington State amendments. The Building Code will provide parameters on how a solar energy system needs to be safely and securely attached to your commercial or multifamily building:

- See [Chapter 15](#) for fire classification associated with rooftop installations.
- See [Chapter 16](#) and ASCE 7 for structural design and loads.

International Fire Code (IFC) requirements with [King County](#) and Washington State amendments. The Fire Code ensures safe access and clearances atop the roof of all buildings:

- See [Section 1204](#) for access, pathways, and spacing requirements associated with a solar arrays.

Washington State Energy Code (WSEC). The Energy Code regulates design and construction of buildings for the use and conservation of energy over the life of each building:

- See [Section C411](#) for required solar zones on new nonresidential buildings.

Resources

- Look to the King County [Green Building Handbook](#) to learn more about solar energy systems and other green building methods.
- Check out the Photovoltaic Solar Panel tip sheet on the www.mybuildingpermit.com website for additional information on residential installations.
- PSE provides a great [list of solar resources](#).