



Missoula County Commercial Solar PV Permitting Checklist

This document is intended to explain the permitting process for non-residential solar electric (photovoltaic) systems for accessory and commercial uses in Missoula County, outside Missoula city limits. Roof mounted and pole mounted solar systems for accessory use are permitted in all county zones. For projects within the Missoula city limits, please refer to the City of Missoula's solar permitting information at <https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2275/Going-Solar>.

I) Roof Mounted Solar for Accessory Use:

1. Apply for Land Use – Zoning Compliance Permit. A Land Use – Zoning Compliance Permit is required for all solar electric systems *except those that are flush mounted to a roof*. Fee = \$50 for accessory solar uses (no fee if the project is in an unzoned area of the county).

Permit Requirements:

- A. Schematic elevations of all four sides of the house, including the new overall height after the solar panels are added.
- B. Site plan (a rough sketch is fine) or aerial photo showing property boundaries, existing structures, proposed structure locations, wells, drain fields, replacement area (if not known please contact the health department for a copy of the septic permit), access, driveways, and all known easements and right-of-ways, etc.

2. Apply for a Building Permit if required.

- A. A Structural Review letter signed and stamped by a Professional Engineer is required. The letter should detail the structural support for the installation. The letter should acknowledge ONE of the following scenarios:
 1. The roof and support structures are adequate to support the load from the planned system.
 2. The roof and support structures need modifications in order to provide additional support for the load from the planned system. These modifications should be detailed and plans and diagrams should be provided with the letter.
- B. A building permit is needed ONLY if modifications to the support structure are required (Scenario 2 above). Building permits must be submitted and approved by Missoula County Building Division before the office will issue an electrical permit. Building permits require a review, which can take anywhere to a few days to several weeks.
- C. Permit fees will be based on the cost of the project, minus electrical equipment cost.

3. Apply for an Electrical Permit.

Permit Requirements:

- A. This permit must be obtained by a licensed electrician. Neither the property owner nor the solar installer may obtain the permit unless they are licensed electricians. The exception is solar projects which will not be tied to the electric grid, in which case the property owner may obtain the electrical permit.
- B. The electrical permit fee will be based on the cost of the electrical portion of the project.

4. Determine whether the property is located within a designated floodplain. This information can be found by entering the property address at <https://gis.missoulacounty.us/CAPS/Floodplain/>.

- A. If the proposed location is within the floodplain, contact the Floodplain Administrator for additional information. (406) 258-4841 or tklietz@missoulacounty.us
- B. If a floodplain permit is required the fee is \$675.

II) Pole/Ground Mounted Solar for Accessory Use:

1. Apply for Land Use – Zoning Compliance Permit. Fee = \$50 (no fee if the project is in an unzoned area of the county).

Permit Requirements:

- A. Overall height of structure (elevations or profile).
- B. Site plan (a rough sketch is fine) or aerial photo showing distances to property boundaries, existing structures, proposed structure location, wells, drain fields, replacement area (if not known please contact the health department for a copy of the septic permit), access, driveways, and all known easements and right-of-ways, etc.

2. **If structure will be over 8 feet in height**, apply for a Building Permit.

Permit Requirements:

- A. A set of plans stamped by a Licensed Montana Engineer that include footing, foundation, wind shear (90 mph wind gusts of 3 seconds), seismic zone C or D (depending on location), and snow load (depending on location), and install schematics are required.
- B. Permit fees will be based on the cost of the project, minus electrical equipment cost.

3. Apply for an Electrical Permit.

- A. This permit must be obtained by a licensed electrician. Neither the property owner nor the solar installer may obtain the permit unless they are licensed electricians. The exception is solar projects which will not be tied to the electric grid, in which case the property owner may obtain the electrical permit.
- B. The electrical permit fee will be based on the cost of the electrical portion of the project.

4. Determine whether the property is located within a designated floodplain. This information can be found by entering the property address at <https://gis.missoulacounty.us/CAPS/Floodplain/>.

- A. If the proposed location is within the floodplain, contact the Floodplain Administrator for additional information. (406) 258-4841 or tklietz@missoulacounty.us
- B.
- B. If a floodplain permit is required the fee is \$675.

(III) Stand-Alone Commercial Use Structure, i.e. Solar Farm:

- a. Building and Electrical Permit requirements are the same as in Section II above.
- b. Determine in what zoning district you plan to install your solar farm. Solar farms are permitted for use in the following districts: C-A1, C-A2, C-I1, and C-I2. If you are installing in one of those districts, or in an unzoned area, you will need to apply for a Land Use Zoning Compliance Permit, the fee is \$200. If you are not in one of those districts, then proceed to steps c and d.
- c. Solar farms would require a Special Exception permit if installing in the following districts: C- P1, C-A3, C-RR1, C-RR2, C-RR3, C-R1, C-R2, C-R3, C-C1, C-C2, and C-C3. All Special Exceptions require an application to the Board of Adjustment (BOA); the application fee is \$1,095. The Special Exception Permit application can be found at <https://www.missoulacounty.us/home/showdocument?id=8893>
- d. If approved by the BOA for a Special Exception permit, you would then need to apply for the Land Use Zoning Compliance Permit, the fee is \$200.
- e. For more information please visit or contact the Planning Info Desk at (406) 258-4642 or email zoner@missoulacounty.us

(V) Apply for a Permit Online:

All permits required for solar installations are available through Odyssey, Missoula County Public Work's online permitting system: <https://webapps.missoulacounty.us/publicpermitting/>.

Information required for an online permit application:

- 1. Geocode, address, and/or legal description. You can obtain this information at: <http://gis.missoulacounty.us/propertyinformation/>.
- 2. Property owner name, address, and phone number (so owner can be contacted).
- 3. Contractor's name, address, phone number, email address, and current MT contractor's license number.
- 4. Electrician's license number (for electrical permits).

To Create Account:

- 1) Click "Register>>"
- 2) Create your personal account and allow one full day for the account to be verified.
- 3) Be sure to make note of your username and password!
- 4) After verification, you can start applying, paying and tracking your permits online.

To Apply for a Permit:

- 1) Click "Login>>" and enter the user name and password that you created during registration and click the "Login" Button.
- 2) Select the type of permit you are applying for from the list on the left of the screen: Address/Approach, Building, Electrical, Excavation, Land Use/Zoning (LUZC), Mechanical, or Plumbing.
- 3) After selecting the type of permit, fill in the requested information in each field.
- 4) Note: below the "Property Owner" section there is a check box that defaults to "Contractor Same as Property Owner." If the Contractor is different than the owner, click the check box to open the Contractor information.
- 5) At the top of the "Property Owner", "Contractor", "Design Professional", and "Tenant" Sections there is a link "Fill from account information" which will auto fill from your account information.
- 6) A site plan is required for Building, Land Use/ Zoning Compliance, Excavation, and Address/Approach Permits. Example site plans and more information on building permit application requirements are available at <http://www.missoulacounty.us/government/public-works/public-works/building-division>.
- 7) If applicable, upload electronic files associated with the permit in the "Drop files here" box; it will only accept PDF files under 10MB. **For Building permits: one complete set of hard copy plans** must be submitted to the Missoula County Building Department at 6089 Training Drive, Missoula, MT 59808. Or you can request that we print out the PDF plans at a cost of \$5.00 per page (24" x 36").
- 8) After inputting all required information for your permit, click on the "Accept Terms and Conditions" box.
- 9) Click on "Submit" at the bottom of the page. You will receive a message that the permit was successfully submitted.
- 10) You can pay the permit fee by clicking on the **View Permit** (green button), and then the **\$ Fees** (orange button). At the bottom of the page is a blue link "Pay by Credit Card or eCheck"—**Pop-Up blockers must be off**. This link will redirect you to MT Interactive which accepts Visa, Master Card, Discover, or eChecks. Note: there is a 3rd party processing fee of \$1.25 + 1.995% for credit cards and \$2.00 for eChecks.
- 11) To schedule an inspection, please call our office at 406-258-3701 or email the request to permits@missoulacounty.us with the permit number, address, and the type of inspection. We can inspect within 24hrs of a request. We schedule inspections in the morning or afternoon time frames, but specific times may be available dependent on inspector availability.
- 12) Contact the Public Works office at 406-258-3701 or 3702 if you have questions.