



Checklist for Residential and Commercial Solar Energy Systems in Red Lodge

Please use this checklist to help guide you through the process of installing a solar energy system within Red Lodge City Limits. This checklist should be used for residential and commercial rooftop systems and ground mount systems. Commercial in this instance refers to buildings which are located within Commercial Zoning areas or buildings that have businesses operating out of them.

If you are a homeowner who has hired a solar provider or contractor to install a system, the Building Permit and Electrical Permit will be obtained by the installer themselves, and do not require any work on your part. Fees and inspections associated with the Building and Electrical Permits will also be handled by your installer.

Rooftop Systems and Ground Mount Systems

- Obtain a Structural Review letter from a Professional Engineer*

If your installation site is within Red Lodge City Limits and on a rooftop, you must obtain a Structural Review letter. This involves hiring an Engineer to come to your proposed installation site and analyze the structural integrity of your roof. The Engineer will produce a letter explaining the structural support needed for the solar installation. The letter should state one of the following scenarios:

- 1- Acknowledge that the support structures in place are adequate to support the additional load from the proposed system.
- 2- Explain the modifications necessary in order to provide adequate support for the proposed system. These modifications should be detailed and plans/diagrams should be included.

Costs associated with a Structural Review vary depending on which company you hire and on the type of building you wish to have reviewed.

*Only applicable to Rooftop Systems

- Obtain a Building Permit

If your installation site is within Red Lodge City Limits you must apply for a Building Permit. Building Permits must be completed and submitted to the City Building Inspector along with the Structural Review Letter, manufacturer installation instructions, and product specs for the array itself and all racking equipment. If the Structural Review Letter states that your rooftop requires modifications, please include two sets of building plans that detail the necessary

modifications. The application will be reviewed by the Building Inspector and it will take several days before it is approved and you are issued the permit.

Building Permits can be found at City Hall or you may request to have one mailed to you by calling 406-446-0196.

Once your Building Permit has been issued you are required to pay a fee, which is a sliding scale that requires you to pay slightly above 1% of the cost of racking and roof modifications (if applicable). There is also an additional \$50 charge for plan review. For example, if the cost of racking and modifications is \$3,175 you will be required to pay a fee of \$80.

A breakdown of Building Permit fees can be found at City Hall or by calling 406-446-0196.

Obtain an Electrical Permit

An Electrical Permit is required for all solar energy systems in the State of Montana. You can fill out the form below and mail it to the Building Codes Bureau along with a check, or you may apply for the permit through the State's online application.

Paper Application:

<http://bsd.dli.mt.gov/Portals/53/Documents/Building-Codes-Permits/dli-bsd-bc003.pdf?ver=2016-09-29-143943-917>

Online Application:

<https://buildingpermits.mt.gov/Licenses/licenses.aspx>

You must also pay a fee in order to obtain an Electrical Permit, and information on pricing is detailed in the application. For your average rooftop system, the fee is \$110.

Perform a Building Inspection

Once your racking system has been installed, the City Building Inspector will need to perform an initial inspection. Inspections are scheduled in a time window of two hours and can be booked several days in advance. A final inspection will also need to be performed once your solar installation has been completed. You may schedule an inspection by calling 406-446-0196.

Perform an Electrical Inspection

Once your solar system has been installed, the State Electrical Inspector will need to perform an electrical inspection. Contact information for the nearest State Inspector will be given to you by the State of Montana as a part of your Electrical Permit once it is issued. You may schedule an inspection by calling the number provided to you on the Electrical Permit.