

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

SOLAR PERMIT CHECKLIST

Thank you for exploring solar for your home or business. Generating clean, local and sustainable power provides tremendous value to our community and we appreciate your leadership.

In Wellesley, as a result of legal requirements related to the Wellesley Municipal Light Plant (WMLP), solar on your home or business must be 100% owned by the homeowner or landowner.

Every solar installation in Wellesley requires a building and electrical inspection. Permit applications can be filed at Wellesley Town Hall, located at 525 Washington Street in the Lower Level. The Building Department office hours are: Monday - Friday: 8 AM - 4 PM. Phone calls are accepted at 781-431-1019 and questions can be fielded by administrative staff throughout the day.

Solar installations must also meet WMLP requirements described in the [Distributed Generation Policy](#) and set forth below. The WMLP is located at 4 Municipal Way. The WMLP Customer Service Hours are Monday - Friday: 7:30am - 4:30 pm. The phone number is 781-235-7600.

Organizing Your Application

The following checklist should be used to organize your permit applications, based on the use, design and location of the system you plan to install.

System Type

Residential: see pages 2-4

Commercial: see pages 5-7

RESIDENTIAL SOLAR PERMIT CHECKLIST

Documentation Required

Below is a list of all materials required to submit an application. Any submittals that are incomplete will not be accepted. **All applications and permits are now available online through the [Building Department's Public Portal](#).** Using this portal, applicants can submit all digital attachments, pay via credit card, monitor application status and track inspections.

Building

- Building Permit Application (One- or Two-Family Dwelling): Available [here](#). Solar is considered an "Alteration" under description of Proposed Work.

- Additional Documentation:
 - [Workers Compensation Insurance Affidavit](#)
 - [Debris Disposal Form](#)
 - Structural Evaluation Report from a MA Registered Design Professional on the dwelling/structure the PV system will be mounted on.
 - Spec Sheets and Installation Manuals – Include specification sheets for all manufactured components including but not limited to PV modules/panels, inverters, combiner box, disconnects, and mounting system.
 - Construction Drawings – Not required but helpful. Copies of plans showing PV array configuration, wiring system, overcurrent protection, inverter, disconnects, required signs, AC connection to building, and attachment detail for roof mounted or footing details for ground mounted.

Electrical

- Application for Permit to Complete Electrical Work: Available [here](#).
- Proof of Liability Insurance

Potential Additional Review: To determine if your residential project will require additional review, please answer the two questions below.

Is the property in a Historic District?

- Yes:** Your project is subject to review and approval by the Historic District Commission (HDC). Any change to an exterior architectural feature within a historic district that is visible from a public road requires a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HDC. The permitting process is explained in [Section XVID of the Zoning Bylaw](#) and is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Is this a ground-mounted array?

Yes: Ground-mounted arrays are not common in our community. Ground-mounted solar installations are subject to the definition of “accessory use” in the Zoning Bylaw and therefore must be located on the same lot or parcel of land on which the principal use is located. Ground-mounted solar installations are considered a structure for purposes of zoning, so please review Wellesley’s [zoning bylaws](#) to ensure compliance with required setbacks/minimum yard requirements. (Note that ground-mounted solar installations are not subject to lot coverage as it is not considered a building, or height restrictions.) We also recommend contacting Wellesley’s Building Inspector and Electrical Inspector to discuss your site plan, safety enclosures, etc. prior to submitting a permit application.

Permit Application Fees

Building permit fees are directly related to installation costs. Final costs will be based on application specifics and must be paid by cash or check (payable to the Town of Wellesley).

- Building:** \$10 per \$1,000 of estimated construction costs. Minimum Fee \$100

- Electrical:** \$50

- WMLP Interconnection:** \$0

Permit Review Process

- Building permit applications will be reviewed within 10 to 14 business days from the time of submittal.
- Electrical permits are typically issued at the time of application.
- To check your permit status, please call the Building Department at 781-431-1019 x2228.

WMLP Interconnection Process

Proposed photovoltaic systems that are less than 15kW AC for single phase or less than 25kW AC for three phase should apply to the WMLP for interconnection under the simplified process described in Attachment A of the [Distributed Generation Policy](#). Most residential systems meet the Simplified Process. Typically, this form is completed by the solar contractor.

❑ **Simplified Process Interconnection Application and Service Agreement (Attachment B) including:**

- a single line diagram showing the entire proposed installation along with the interconnection point with WMLP
- any documentation provided by the inverter manufacturer describing the inverter's UL 1741 listing.

Scheduling an Inspection

Electrical Inspections: The electrical permit applicant calls the Electrical Inspector at 781-431-1019 Ext. 2222 to schedule an inspection. Inspection times are 9am-2:30pm.

Building Permits: The building permit applicant calls the Building Department at 781-431-1019 Ext. 2226 or 2228 to schedule an inspection. Inspection times are 10am-12pm and 2pm-3:30pm. The Building Permit applicant must be present for inspection. Electrical inspection will need to be completed prior to the building inspection.

WMLP – Witness Test and Meter Installation: Once the electrical inspection and building inspection are completed, WMLP performs a Witness Test to confirm that the system is working properly and can disconnect appropriately. At that time, the WMLP installs a net meter and issues a written authorization for the system to be energized and start producing power.

Permit Expiration

Building permits shall become invalid unless the work on the site authorized by such permit is commenced within 180 days after its issuance, or if the work authorized on the site by such permit is suspended or abandoned for a period of 180 days after the time the work is commenced. (See section 105.5 of the 2015 IBC w/ MA amendments or section R105.5 of the 2015 IRC w/ MA amendments)

Electrical permits shall be limited as to the time of ongoing construction activity, and may be deemed by the Inspector of Wires abandoned and invalid if he/she has determined that the work authorized has not commenced or has not progressed during the preceding 12-month period. (See rule 8 of 527 CMR 12.00)

COMMERCIAL SOLAR CHECKLIST

There are nuances to every site and we encourage you to contact the Building Department to discuss your plans prior to submitting a commercial permit application. To determine if your project will require additional review, please answer the below questions.

Standard Application Fees

Permit fees are directly related to installation costs and system size. Please use the below fee structure to calculate approximate permitting fees. Final costs will be based on application specifics and must be paid by cash or check (payable to the Town of Wellesley).

- Building:** \$15 per \$1,000 of construction costs. Minimum fee \$300.
- Electrical:** \$100 fee plus \$10 per \$1,000 of electrical costs
- Design Review:** \$150 (if required)

Documentation Required

All solar installs require building and wiring permits. Below is a list of all materials required. Any submittals that are incomplete will not be accepted.

Building

- Commercial Building Permit Application:** This application is available [here](#). Please note that solar is considered an “Alteration” under Proposed Work.
- Additional Documentation:**
 - [Workers Compensation Insurance Affidavit](#)
 - [Debris Disposal Form](#)
 - For Ground-Mounted Systems, Site Plan Review decision from the Zoning Board of Appeals if grading or regrading of land to planned elevations and/or disturbance of the existing vegetative cover, over an area of 5,000 or more sq. ft.
 - Design Review Board Recommendation if change in the outside appearance of the building or grounds is visible from a public or private street or way
 - Initial Construction Control Documents if building over 35,000 CF of enclosed space and PV system is mounted on the building (See Section 107 of the 2015 IBC with MA amendments)

- Investigation and Evaluation Report done in accordance with the 2015 International Existing Building Code (IEBC) if PV system mounted on the building. (See Section 104.2.2.1 of the MA amendments of the 2015 IEBC)
- Construction Drawings - One (1) copy of plans sealed by a MA Registered Design Professional showing PV array configuration, wiring system, overcurrent protection, inverter, disconnects, required signs, AC connection to building, and attachment detail for roof mounted or footing details for ground mounted.
- Spec Sheets and Installation Manuals – Include specification sheets for all manufactured components including but not limited to PV modules/panels, inverters, combiner box, disconnects, and mounting system.

Electrical

- Application for Permit to Complete Electrical Work:** This application is available [here](#) and must be fully complete.
- Proof of Liability Insurance**

WMLP Interconnection Process

Proposed photovoltaic systems that are less than 15kW AC for single phase or less than 25kW AC for three phase should apply to the WMLP for interconnection under the simplified process described of the [Distributed Generation Policy](#). (See Simplified Process for Residential facility above.)

A Facility not qualified for the Simplified Process must use the Standard Process. The Standard Process is as follows:

1. Interconnecting Customer submits a Standard Process Interconnection Application and Service Agreement (Attachment C to the Distributed Generation Policy) and a single line diagram showing the entire proposed installation along with the interconnection point with WMLP.
2. WMLP will conduct an initial review of the Application. A meeting will be held between WMLP and the Interconnecting Customer. At this meeting, WMLP will provide the Interconnecting Customer with pertinent information.
3. WMLP will provide a cost estimate for the study to determine distribution system modifications.
4. Interconnecting Customer pays for study.
5. The WMLP will perform the study and determine the cost of required system modifications.

6. WMLP prepares and sends the Interconnecting Customer a cost estimate and an appropriate executable Interconnection Service Agreement.
7. Interconnecting Customer returns the signed Interconnection Service Agreement.
8. WMLP executes the Interconnection Service Agreement.
9. Interconnecting Customer completes installation and, upon receipt of payment, the WMLP completes system modifications as required.
10. Interconnection Customer sends an approved Building Permit to WMLP.
11. WMLP inspects completed installation for compliance with this Policy and attends a Witness Test.
12. The WMLP provides written authorization to operate the Facility in Parallel.

Inspection Process

Commercial building inspections will require an in-person visit from Wellesley's Building Commissioner, and rough and final wiring inspections from Wellesley's electrical inspector.

Additional Documentation: Final Construction Control documents need to be submitted at time of final Building Inspection.

See page 4 of this document for directions on how to request an inspection.