

# City of La Quinta

CITY COUNCIL MEETING: SEPTEMBER 15, 2015

## STAFF REPORT

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**AGENDA TITLE:** ADOPT RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS BULLETIN AND ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST FOR EXPEDITED SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC PERMITTING.

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### RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution establishing a submittal requirements bulletin and eligibility checklist for expedited solar photovoltaic permitting.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Assembly Bill 2188 (AB 2188) requires the City to establish an expedited permitting process for small residential solar systems of 10 kilowatts or less by September 30, 2015.
- On August 4, 2015, the City Council adopted Ordinance 527, which added Chapter 8.90 to the La Quinta Municipal Code establishing expedited permitting procedures for small residential rooftop solar systems.
- This action would approve the bulletin and checklist to implement the expedited permitting procedures.

**FISCAL IMPACT** – None.

### BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

On September 21, 2014, Governor Brown signed AB 2188 into law requiring an expedited permitting process for small residential solar systems of 10 kilowatts or less on or by September 30, 2015. AB 2188 also mandates a checklist that identifies how an applicant may achieve expedited review.

Ordinance 527 (Chapter 8.90 of the Code) established the expedited permit process. The bulletin and checklist (Exhibits A and B to the resolution) will guide both applicants and City staff in implementing Chapter 8.90.

### ALTERNATIVES

As the proposed resolution will bring the City's Municipal Code into compliance with State law, staff does not recommend an alternative.

Report prepared by: Burt Hanada, Building Official

Report approved by: Les Johnson, Community Development Director



RESOLUTION NO. 2015 - \_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA QUINTA, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS BULLETIN AND ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST FOR EXPEDITED SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC PERMITTING FOR PURPOSES OF IMPLEMENTING ORDINANCE NO. 527**

**WHEREAS**, on September 21, 2014, the governor signed Assembly Bill 2188 (Stats. 2014, Ch. 521) into law, and;

**WHEREAS**, Assembly Bill 2188 provides that the implementation of consistent statewide standards to achieve the timely and cost-effective installation of solar energy systems is a matter of statewide concern, and;

**WHEREAS**, Section 65850.5 to the California Government Code now provides that, on or before September 30, 2015, every city, county, or city and county shall adopt an ordinance that creates an expedited and streamlined permitting process for small residential rooftop solar energy systems, and;

**WHEREAS**, to assist in the implementation of Ordinance No. 527, which added Chapter 8.90 to the La Quinta Municipal Code (Chapter 8.90) relating to standards for small residential rooftop solar energy systems, the City Council desires to adopt a checklist and bulletin for purposes of assisting both applicants and staff in furtherance of the implementation of Chapter 8.90.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of La Quinta, California, as follows:

**SECTION 1.** “Submittal Requirements Bulletin Solar Photovoltaic Installations 10kW or Less in One- and Two-Family Dwellings,” attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby adopted and shall be utilized in the implementation of Chapter 8.90.

**SECTION 2.** “Eligibility Checklist for Solar Photovoltaic Permitting for One- and Two-Family Dwellings,” attached hereto as Exhibit B, is hereby adopted and shall be utilized in the implementation of Chapter 8.90.

**SECTION 3.** This Resolution shall not become effective until the effective date of Ordinance No. 527, relating to standards for small residential rooftop solar energy systems.

**PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED** at a regular meeting of the La Quinta City Council held on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2015, by the following vote:

**AYES:**

**NOES:**

**ABSENT:**

**ABSTAIN:**

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LINDA EVANS, Mayor  
City of La Quinta, California

**ATTEST:**

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SUSAN MAYSELS, City Clerk  
City of La Quinta, California

(CITY SEAL)

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

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WILLIAM H. IHRKE, City Attorney  
City of La Quinta, California



## Submittal Requirements Bulletin Solar Photovoltaic Installations 10 kW or Less in One- and Two-Family Dwellings

This information bulletin is published to guide applicants through a streamlined permitting process and provides information about submittal requirements for plan review, required fees and inspections.

### Approval Requirements

A Solar Permit is required from the Community Development Department Building Division for the installation of a Photovoltaic System with a Maximum Rating of 10kW on One- and Two- Family Dwelling Construction.

Planning Division review is not required for Photovoltaic System installations of this size.  
Fire Department approval is not required for Photovoltaic System installations of this size.

### Submittal Requirements

- Completed Permit Application Form.

*This permit application form can be downloaded at the City Building Division Website.*

- Compliance with the Eligibility Checklist for Expedited Permitting.

*These criteria can be downloaded at the City Building Division Website. This Guidebook recommends use of a simple checklist to clearly identify eligibility criteria for expedited permitting, where established.*

- Completed Standard Electrical Plan.

*The standard plan may be used for proposed solar installations 10 kW in size or smaller and can be downloaded at City Building Division Website. This Guidebook recommends use of a standard plan that allows permit applicants to simply fill in information regarding a solar system's electrical configuration.*

If standard electrical plans are not provided for use, an electrical plan is required to be submitted that includes the following information:

- Locations of main service or utility disconnect
- Total number of modules, number of modules per string and the total number of strings
- Make and model of inverter(s) and/or combiner box if used
- One- or Three- line diagram of system
- Specify grounding/bonding, conductor type and size, conduit type and size and number of conductors in each section of conduit
- If batteries are to be installed, include them in the diagram and show their locations and venting.
- Equipment cut sheets including inverters, modules, AC and DC disconnects, combiners and wind generators.
- Labeling of equipment as required by CEC, Sections 690 and 705 and CFC 605.11
- Site diagram showing the arrangement of panels on the roof or ground, north arrow, lot dimensions and the distance from property lines to adjacent buildings/structures (existing and proposed)

- A roof plan showing roof layout, PV panels and the following fire safety items:

- Approximate location of roof access point, location of code-compliant access pathways, PV system fire classification and the locations of all required labels and markings.

Examples of clear path access pathways are available in the State Fire Marshal Solar PV Installation Guide. <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/pdf/reports/solarphotovoltaicguideline.pdf>.

- Completed expedited Structural Criteria along with required documentation.

*Structural Criteria can be reviewed at the City Building Division Website.*

For non-qualifying systems, provide structural drawings and calculations stamped and signed by a California-licensed Civil or Structural Engineer, along with the following information.

- The type of roof covering and the number of roof coverings installed
- Type of roof framing, size of members and spacing
- Weight of panels, support locations and method of attachment
- Framing plan and details for any work necessary to strengthen the existing roof structure
- Site-specific structural calculations
- Where an approved racking system is used, provide documentation showing manufacture of the rack system, maximum allowable weight the system can support, attachment method to the roof or ground and product evaluation information or structural design for the rack system

*This Guidebook recommends that local jurisdictions adopt a prescriptive approach to establishing minimal structural requirements that avoids the need for structural calculations. A simple list of criteria is provided in this Guidebook (Toolkit Document 5). A full explanation of the methods and calculations used to produce these criteria can be found in the Structural Technical Appendix for Residential Rooftop Solar Installations, which is available at*

[http://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/Solar\\_Structural\\_Technical\\_Appendix.pdf](http://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/Solar_Structural_Technical_Appendix.pdf).

## Plan Submittal and Review

Permit applications can be submitted in person at the City’s Permit Center, electronically through the City’s Website or by email. All submittals to the maximum extent feasible will be reviewed by the end of the following business day.

Permit applications submitted at the City’s Permit Center with a scheduled appointment and utilizing a standard electrical plan may be reviewed and approved at the counter.

*Utilization of the City’s Website and the eTRAKiT Portal will allow users to interact directly with the Permit and Inspection software to have live status updates, monitor all applications at one location, including application approvals and comments, make payments and schedule inspections. Contractors that participate will be provided a login that will allow them to manage all jobs within the City from any web-enabled device, allowing them to manage personal accordingly and with ease.*

Contacts:

- Physical Address: 78-495 Calle Tampico, La Quinta, CA 92253
- Website: [www.La-Quinta.org](http://www.La-Quinta.org)
- Email: [solarpermits@la-quinta.org](mailto:solarpermits@la-quinta.org)

## Fees

Description	Permit Fee	Plan Review Fee
Array, Inverter, Disconnect (First 20 Qty)	\$24.17	\$24.17
Array, Inverter, Disconnect (each additional)	\$24.17	\$24.17

Sub-Panel , Service Upgrade (per/each)	\$24.17	\$12.09
Permit Issuance Fee	\$91.85	
Building Standards Fee	\$1.00 per \$25,000.00 Valuation	

**Typical/Approximate Solar Permit Fee; Including Plan Review Fees: \$140.19**

## Inspections

Once all permits to construct the solar installation have been issued and the system has been installed, it must be inspected before final approval is granted and the system is released to the power utility company.

Inspections may be requested by telephone through the Community Development Department Building Division Inspection Request Line at (760) 777-7153 or electronically through the City's Website.

Inspections are performed the following business day from the date when they are requested, but may be performed the same day if requested prior to 6:00 AM. Requests for inspection may not be requested prior to one (1) day in advance.

Permit holders must be prepared to show conformance with all technical requirements in the field at the time of inspection. The inspector will verify that the installation is in conformance with applicable code requirements and with the approved plans, including the following items:

- Number of Photovoltaic modules and associated model numbers match plan
- Array conductors and components are installed in a neat and workman-like manner
- Array(s) is/are properly grounded, and fastened in place per attachment details
- Electrical boxes are accessible and connections are suitable for environment
- Conductor ratings and sizes match plans
- Overcurrent circuit protection devices (OCPDs) are rated and installed per plan
- Equipment ratings and models are consistent with the approved plan
- Appropriate signs are properly constructed, installed and displayed, including PV power source system attributes identification, and identification of AC point of connection, alternative power system is onsite, PV circuit conductors and if the system is Ungrounded.

## Departmental Contact Information

For additional information regarding this permit process, please consult the Community Development Department Building Division website at [www.la-quinta.org](http://www.la-quinta.org) or call (760) 777-7125.







## Eligibility Checklist for Expedited Solar Photovoltaic Permitting for One- and Two-Family Dwellings

### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- |  |                            |                            |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| A. System size is 10 kW AC CEC rating or less  | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| B. The solar array is roof-mounted on one- or two-family dwelling or accessory structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| C. The solar panel/module arrays will not exceed the maximum legal building height       | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| D. Solar system is utility interactive and without battery storage                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| E. Permit application is completed and attached  | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |

### ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS

- |  |                            |                            |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| No more than four photovoltaic module strings are connected to each Maximum PowerPoint Tracking (MPPT) input where source circuit fusing is included in the inverter | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 1) No more than two strings per MPPT input where source circuit fusing is not included   | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 2) Fuses (if needed) are rated to the series fuse rating of the PV module  | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 3) No more than one noninverter-integrated DC combiner is utilized per inverter  | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| A. For central inverter systems: No more than two inverters are utilized   | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| B. The PV system is interconnected to a single-phase AC service panel of nominal 120/220 Vac with a bus bar rating of 225 A or less                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| C. The PV system is connected to the load side of the utility distribution equipment   | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| D. A Solar PV Standard Plan and supporting documentation is completed and attached   | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |

### STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

- |   |                            |                            |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| A. A completed Structural Criteria and supporting documentation is attached (if required) | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|

### FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- |  |                            |                            |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| A. Clear access pathways provided  | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| B. Fire classification solar system is provided  | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| C. All required markings and labels are provided   | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| D. A diagram of the roof layout of all panels, modules, clear access pathways and approximate locations of electrical disconnecting means and roof access points is completed and attached | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |

#### Notes:

1. *These criteria are intended for expedited solar permitting process.*
2. *If any items are checked NO, revise design to fit within Eligibility Checklist, otherwise permit application may go through standard process.*

