

TOWN OF LITCHFIELD

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

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www.townoflitchfield.org



Litchfield Solar Photovoltaic (PV) System Permitting Checklist

<https://www.townoflitchfield.org/entities/sustainable-litchfield>

Objective

The goal of an online Permitting Checklist is to provide clear and transparent information that will streamline the permitting processes for owners and contractors, reduce inquiries from solar installers, and improve application quality.

The Permitting Checklist covers the key steps in Litchfield's permitting and inspection process for solar PV systems. Use the checklist below to gather the information and project plan details required to be submitted to the Town of Litchfield when applying for a residential solar photovoltaic (PV) system permit.

Codes and Design Criteria

The State of Connecticut has adopted the 2022 Connecticut State Building Code which includes both building and electrical standards. Litchfield follows this Code.

<https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/Office-of-State-Building-Inspector/Connecticut-State-Building-Code/Regulations>

Regulations for Three Types of Solar Energy Collectors

1. **Solar Collectors - Roof Mounted** - Solar collectors attached to a roof are allowed, with no Zoning Permit required, in all districts of Litchfield, provided that:
 - a. No portion of the solar collector shall extend beyond the perimeter of the roof on which it is mounted.

- b. No portion of the solar collector, in combination with the building height, shall exceed the applicable maximum building height (in feet), as set forth in these Regulations for the zoning district.
- c. The collector is in accordance with Section BB.5 of the Litchfield's Zoning Regulations, effective March 1, 2023.

<https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/litchfield-ct/planning-zoning-commission/resources/files/1404/Updated%20Zoning%20Regs%20Effective%20Date%203.1.23%20REV%202.21.23.pdf>

2. Solar Collectors - Wall Mounted

Wall mounted solar collectors are allowed, with no Zoning Permit required, in all districts of Litchfield, provided that the collector is in accordance with Section BB.5 of the Zoning Regulations, effective March 1, 2023.

<https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/litchfield-ct/planning-zoning-commission/resources/files/1404/Updated%20Zoning%20Regs%20Effective%20Date%203.1.23%20REV%202.21.23.pdf>

3. Solar Collectors - Ground Mounted

- a. Ground mounted solar collectors are permitted by Site Plan Approval in all residential zones and all commercial zones except that **a *Special Exception*** shall be required if:
 - 1) The building coverage limit for the zoning district is or will be exceeded by the building(s), solar collectors, and other structures on the property.
 - 2) The property is in a local historic district.
 - 3) The ground mounted solar system is located between the building and the street.
 - 4) Any part of a ground mounted solar collector exceeds 15 feet in height.
 - 5) The proposed location is in an area identified on the Natural Diversity Database as maintained by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.
<https://www.depdata.ct.gov/naturalresources/endangeredspeciesmaps/nd074.pdf>
 - 6) The ground mounted solar collector installation will occur on pre-development slopes of 15 percent or steeper.
- b. Ground mounted solar collectors shall be located so that no portion of the structure is within the required setback for the zone.
- c. All electrical and other connections to ground mounted solar collectors shall be located underground.

- d. Prior to issuance of a Zoning Permit (required), a certificate of appropriateness with regard to the solar collector(s) shall have been received for any property which is in a local historic district in Litchfield.
- e. No signage shall be allowed on any solar system other than the manufacturer's label on the back of each solar collector.
- f. Any application for a Zoning Permit, for Site Plan approval, and/or for Special Exception approval shall include a letter from the property owner indicating:
 - 1) a pledge on behalf of themselves and their successors/assigns that any solar array which has been abandoned or is in a visible state of disrepair shall be removed or repaired at the then owner's expense within six months of notice to do so from the Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO), and
 - 2) their understanding that failure to remove or repair such system(s) may be treated as a zoning violation and be subject to penalties as provided in Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 8-12 and/or other remedies available.
- g. An application for a ground mounted solar collector shall be accompanied by a site layout plan of sufficient detail and such other information as necessary to determine compliance with setback requirements and other provisions of these Regulations. For a Special Exception application, the Planning and Zoning Commission may waive the requirement that the plan be signed and sealed by an appropriate professional if the site layout plan provides sufficient detail and accuracy, as determined by the Commission.
- h. The site layout plan shall show the location of the solar collector(s), relevant setbacks and property lines, and existing structures (as applicable).
- i. No Zoning Permit shall be issued for a ground mount solar collector unless the Torrington Area Health District has signed off on the location relative to septic location, well location, and any other applicable provisions of the Health Code.
- j. The following local design criteria should be used: max wind speed 110 mph, ground snow load 30 psi, frost depth 42 in. minimum.

Required Permits for Residential Solar PV Systems

Permits must be obtained prior to the start of any work. Complete the following permit application form(s) and submit any additional required documents.

- ☐ Electrical Permit – required.
<https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/litchfield-ct/building-department/resources/files/9/Electrical%20permit%20applications%202018%202021.pdf>
- ☐ Building Permit – required.
<https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/litchfield-ct/building-department/resources/files/6/Building%20permit%20applications%202018%202021.pdf>

- Zoning Permit - not required for residential roof or wall installations. See Planning and Zoning Regulations for requirements for ground mounted installations, effective 3/1/2023, Section BB.
<https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/litchfield-ct/planning-zoning-commission/resources/files/1404/Updated%20Zoning%20Regs%20Effective%20Date%203.1.23%20REV%202.21.23.pdf>

Zoning Permit Application (if required)

<https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/litchfield-ct/land-use/documents/generals/53199/Zoning%20Permit%202023.pdf>

Additional Required Documents

1. Approvals are required for solar installations in Historic Districts.
 - a) If the project is in the Litchfield Historic District, approval is required from: Litchfield Historic Commission, P.O. Box 913, Litchfield, CT 06759. Contact: Julia Metcalf 860-567-8866. Call for information.
 - b) If the project is in the Historic District of Milton, approval is required of: Milton Historic District (Acting Chair, Carol Bramley), 632 Maple Street, Litchfield 06759. Call for information 860-626-9042.
2. For all solar projects in the Town of Litchfield, including in Historic Districts, building and electric permits and approvals are needed from: Building Office, Town Hall Annex, 80 Doyle Road, Bantam, CT 06750. Contact: John Worthington, 860-567-7567, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm, . Building Office hours are 9:00 am – 10:30 am, call for an appointment.
3. For projects other than roof or wall mount systems, zoning approval is required from the Land Use Administrator, Spencer Musselman, 860-567-7565, 9:00 am – 4:30 pm.
4. Workers Compensation requirements for Building Permits:

Proof of Workers Compensation should be submitted to the Building Department; or submit a certificate of insurance to the Building Department. https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/litchfield-ct/building-department/resources/files/14/workers_comp.pdf

5. NOTE: None of the documents below needs to be stamped by an engineer. In all cases, only one copy is required.

☐ Site Plan

- Site plan should show the location of major components on the property. The site plan drawing need not be exactly to scale, but it should represent relative location of components at site (see supplied example site plan).
- PV arrays in compliance with [IRC fire setback requirements](#) need no separate fire service review. Fire setback compliance is taken care of within the plans submitted to the Building Dept.

☐ Electrical Diagram

Electrical diagrams/worksheets should show PV system configuration, wiring system, overcurrent protection, inverter, disconnects, required signs, and AC connection to the building.

☐ Specification sheets and installation manuals (if available)

- Provide spec sheets and manuals for all manufactured components including, but not limited to, PV modules, inverter(s), combiner box, disconnects, and mounting system

Contractor Requirements

The Building Department accesses online certifications and licenses from the Department of Consumer Protection, <https://portal.ct.gov/DCP>. Alternatively, the contractor may submit a copy of Registration and Licensure documents:

- Builder submits a home improvement contractor license
- Electrician submits an electrical license

Litchfield Permit Fees for Residential Rooftop Solar Installations

Building and electrical fees are found in the online applications:

<https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/litchfield-ct/building-department/resources/files/9/Electrical%20permit%20applications%202018%202021.pdf>

<https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/litchfield-ct/building-department/resources/files/6/Building%20permit%20applications%202018%202021.pdf>

Building and Electrical permit fees are \$20 for the first \$1,000 of project cost plus \$10 for each additional \$1,000 or any part thereof. The majority of residential rooftop permits in Litchfield are under \$500 in total. See the example below.

Permit Fees for Solar PV Systems (includes inspection)	Cost	Building Permit	Electrical Permit	Total Permit Application Fees (Building and Electric)
	First \$1000	\$20	\$20	
	Each added \$1000 or part thereof	\$10	\$10	
Example Project Cost:		\$10,500	\$20,000	
Fees		\$120	\$210	\$330

Zoning permit fees are found in the Zoning Permit Application Form, for systems requiring zoning permit and approval:

<https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/litchfield-ct/land-use/documents/generals/53199/Zoning%20Permit%202023.pdf>

Submitting Permit Application

Applications may be downloaded available online. Permit applications may be submitted in person, by email, or by mail. When you are ready to apply, include a letter or email that includes the application(s), a project description, and all other required documents described above. You may refer to this example email/letter.

<https://municipal-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/litchfield-ct/sustainable-litchfield/resources/files/1612/Example%20Cover%20Letter%20for%20Solar%20Permit%20Applications.pdf>

Email copies of your cover letter, all required permit applications and accompanying documents to the Town of Litchfield Building Office, Building Assistant bld_assistant@townoflitchfield.org. Send PDF files only; you may need to send large files separately. If delivering your applications and supporting documents in person, the Building Office.

Review Process Timeline

The Town of Litchfield is committed to providing a timely review of solar PV permit applications. Best efforts are made to review completed residential solar permit applications within one week. The average number of days for permit approval for rooftop solar is within

one week. These turnaround times are typical, not guaranteed. Litchfield has a staff of dedicated individuals, but workloads, vacations, and sick leave can cause unforeseen delays that may impact turnaround time.

Ground mount solar installations which must be approved by the Zoning Board may have an approval timeframe that depends on the board's meeting schedule.

Certain circumstances can prolong the permit turnaround time including: applicant does not submit all required information; contractor applying for permit is not a licensed contractor; equipment is not listed.

Permit Status

To check your permit status please contact the Building Department,
bld_assistant@townoflitchfield.org
Phone: 860-567-7567

Permit Expiration

All permits expire six (6) months after date of issue. Failure to start the work authorized by a permit within this six-month period renders the permit invalid and a new permit must be obtained. Once work begins, noticeable progress must continue until completion. All work must be complete within eighteen (18) months of a permit issue date.

Scheduling an Inspection and the Inspection Process

To schedule an inspection please call the Building Department, Phone: 860-567-7567

A residential solar PV system requires 3 inspections:

- Site inspection
- Electrical inspection
- Building inspection

Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact the Building Department.

- Contact: John K. Worthington
- Office Email: worthingtonj@townoflitchfield.org
- Office Phone Number: Phone: 860-567-7567 Fax: 860-567-7573
- Address: 80 Doyle Rd., PO Box 12 Bantam, CT 06750
- Hours of Operation: Office: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

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