



SOLAR PERMITTING



Installing a solar project in the city of Eau Claire requires obtaining permits from the City’s Inspections Office. Permits will vary depending on the project. Inspections is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday. They are located on the ground floor of City Hall at 203 South Farwell Street. Inspectors are available to answer questions and issue permits during the following times: 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.; 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.; and 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Local power companies have their own process and this sheet does not explain their requirements in full. Please contact them for what they require.

GENERAL PERMITTING & INSPECTIONS PROCESS CHECKLIST

- Installer must have proper state licensing whether electrical, plumbing or building. Master and contractor licenses and proof of insurance are needed to pull a permit.
- Installer brings **complete** project plans to Inspections during office hours noted above. Includes the proper permit fees per the City’s current Fee Schedule.
 - o Person paying for the solar project should be present to pay for the permit(s) or pay with credit card at the City’s Treasury Office.
- Upon successful plan review, Inspections staff will issue the necessary permit(s).
 - o If an array is $\leq 10\text{kW}$, the permit can be issued within 3 working days or less.
- Inspections staff will make final inspection after project completion.
 - o Interim inspections may be needed during the project depending on project type (e.g., footings for a ground mount system)
- After completion, commissioning installer/responsible party must send completed Distributed Generation (DG) Interconnection Agreement to the respective power utility. Agreement form must be signed by the customer/owner. (The DG Application should have been submitted in advance of project start.)
 - o **Xcel Energy:** For businesses call 1-800-481-4700; for residential call 1-800-824-1688. Forms may be found on the State’s [PSC website](#). An Xcel Electric Inspection Certificate is also required and needs to be signed by the City inspector before approving interconnection.
 - o **Eau Claire Energy Cooperative:** Call 715-832-1603 or visit their [website](#).
- Installer makes commissioning appointment with a utility representative to obtain final power utility inspection and schedule change in meter before bi-directional unit. Installers do not pull meters.
- Project is commissioned and begins producing energy.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much do permits cost?

- o 2017 electric one and two unit residential are \$39 for a service change and \$66 for all other uses. Plumbing permits are \$34 for one and two unit residential and \$56 for all other uses.

How long does it take to obtain a permit?

- o Three days or less for small projects $\leq 10\text{kW}$, or up to 10 business days for larger projects.

How long after installation do I have to wait for an inspection?

- o If planned ahead, may be less than 24 hours, but generally within a few days.

How do I schedule an appointment for an inspection?

- Call Inspections Division at (715) 839-4947.

How many City inspections are required?

- Depends, but usually one or two. For electric, at least one for the service change (typically at final). Possibly one extra if for footings or roof load concerns. One or two for plumbing.

What are complete project plans?

- Filled out building permits for project, appropriate fees submitted, an electrical line diagram, PV panel specification sheets, site plan, building plans if needing support structure (includes rooftop if roof load is questionable); if plumbing, plumbing specs. Here are further specifics, if relevant:
 1. Site plan showing the location of major components on the property
 2. Framing cross section showing the type of solar support, spacing, span dimension, and roof slope
 3. Specification sheets and installation manuals for all manufactured components including, but not limited to, PV modules, inverter(s), combiner box, disconnects, and mounting system.
 4. Electrical diagram showing PV array configuration, wiring system, overcurrent protection, inverter, disconnects, required signs, and AC connection to building.

What about solar projects on historic properties?

- Contact the City's Planning Division at (715) 839-4914 for guidance.

Permit Examples – What is required (with 2017 fees listed?)

**100 kW PV Commercial
Rooftop Array**

- Electrical Permit (\$66)
- Building Permit (depends)
- Issued 10 days or less



**5 kW PV Ground-mount
Single family home**

- 1 & 2 Family Electrical Permit (\$39)
- Building Permit (\$28)
- Issued 3 days or less



**Multi-family Apartment
Rooftop Solar H₂O**

- Electrical Permit (\$66)
- Plumbing Permit (\$56)
- Building Permit (depends)
- Issued 10 days or less



Best Practices

Here are some suggested practices that *may* help make solar easier, cheaper and safer:

- Submit Distributed Generation forms ahead of project completion to accelerate utility approvals.
- Minimize installer/contractor visits by planning ahead or coordinating same day inspections; such as with the City's final inspection and then the utility interconnection commissioning appointment.
- Have ready to sign at City final inspection any required utility forms/electric inspection certificates.
- Per electric code permanently and clearly label all required devices, including the AC Disconnect near the meter to improve visibility and safety.
- Always leave room for fire access, such as on the north roof slope to allow entry if there is a fire.
- Consider rooftop solar when getting a new roof. Have a feasibility study completed for both.