

# NYC SOLAR PERMITTING PROCESS GUIDE

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A PROGRAM OF



# NYC Solar Permitting Process Guide

## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable CUNY of the City University of New York formed the NYC Solar Partnership in 2006, working collaboratively with the NYC Mayor’s Office and the New York City Economic Development Corporation to develop and implement comprehensive plans for large-scale solar integration in NYC. Sustainable CUNY formalized the Smart DG Hub after Hurricane Sandy, engaging solar and energy storage Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and NYC Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs) to work on creating a pathway to the marketplace for storage. The DG Hub focuses on facilitating the development of clear solar and storage permitting processes, sharing best practices through workshops and summits, and providing technical assistance tools such as the NY Solar Map & Portal and the Ombudsman program. Sustainable CUNY is an integral program of the Office of Sustainability and Energy Conservation in the University’s Department of Facilities Planning, Construction and Management (FPCM).

The Smart DG Hub’s [NYC Solar & Storage Ombudsman](#) program is a strategic effort led by Sustainable CUNY, working with Con Edison, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), NYC Department of Buildings (DOB), the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) and other NYC Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs) to facilitate a predictable and transparent permitting and interconnection processes in NYC.

The 2025 update to this Guide was developed to supplement NYC DOB’s [Step-by-Step Solar Job Filing Guide](#), reflecting key changes to the job filing process utilizing DOB NOW: Build, and detailing requirements specific to installing in NYC.

Support for the development of the initial Guide in 2016 was provided by the U.S. Department of Energy’s SunShot Initiative Rooftop Solar Challenge and NYSERDA’s NY-Sun Program.

For additional assistance, or questions not addressed in this guide, please contact the NYC Solar & Storage Ombudsmen at [smartdghub@cuny.edu](mailto:smartdghub@cuny.edu).

*This guide is intended to help qualified professionals navigate the Solar PV permitting process in NYC and does not supersede any AHJ guidance. Links are provided throughout this document to AHJ resources, codes, and requirements that may be changed and updated over time. Consult qualified and licensed professionals to ensure installations meet all project requirements.*

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## Getting Started: NYC Licensing Requirements & Responsibilities

*All Solar PV projects installed in NYC require construction and electrical permits issued by NYC DOB. Project specifics may require other filing and license requirements.*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b><u><a href="#">Design Professional - New York State Registered Architect or Professional Engineer</a></u></b></p> | <p>The Registered Design Professional (RDP), either a NYS licensed Professional Engineer (PE) or Registered Architect (RA), must prepare drawings and submit the job filing online through DOB NOW: Build. The RDP submitting the filing is known as the Applicant of Record. Registered <a href="#">Filing Representatives</a> may prepare applications, but the Applicant must submit the filing and sign/seal all documents, statements and plans, as required.</p>   |
| <p><b><u><a href="#">NYC Master Electrician</a></u></b></p>   | <p>The NYC Licensed Master Electrician (LME) is required to file and obtain electrical permits for solar PV online through DOB NOW: Build. The NYC Master Electrician must work for a registered NYC electrician business.</p>   |
| <p><b><u><a href="#">NYC General Contractor</a></u></b></p>   | <p>Once a job filing is approved, only the General Contractor can request the work permit through DOB NOW: Build. General Liability, Disability, and Workers’ Compensation Insurance are required. Certificates of Insurance must be submitted to DOB’s licensing unit and an Insurance Tracking Number obtained prior to applying for the NYC General Contractor License.</p>   |
| <p><b><u><a href="#">NYC Certified Asbestos Investigator</a></u></b></p>  | <p>NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requires that buildings constructed before April 1, 1987 must be inspected for asbestos-containing material (ACM) in areas that may be disturbed during construction. If required, forms must be submitted to NYC DEP, and signed/sealed by the Certified Asbestos Investigator, prior to submitting your job to DOB.</p>  |
| <p><b><u><a href="#">NYC Registered Special Inspector and Special Inspection Agencies</a></u></b></p>                   | <p>In order to complete required inspections on specific DOB Technical Reports required with the filing (e.g. TR1), a Special Inspector must be identified to take responsibility and inspect the installation to make sure it complies with the code items selected on the Technical Reports. PEs and RAs often hold this registration, but there may be additional requirements. The Special Inspector must also work for a Registered Special Inspector Agency.<br/><i>Note: Special Inspectors cannot work for the General Contractor. They must be a third party.</i></p> |
| <p><b><u><a href="#">Home Improvement Contractor License</a></u></b></p>  | <p>The NYC Department of Consumer Affairs issues Home Improvement Contractor (HIC) licenses. HIC licenses are required for a person or business engaged in the construction, repair, remodeling, or addition to any residential land or building in NYC.<br/><i>Note: Local Law 31 of 2020 repealed the Home Improvement Salesperson licensing requirements – this does not impact HIC license requirements.</i></p>   |

## Step 1: Evaluate the need for an Asbestos Investigation

NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requires that buildings constructed before April 1, 1987 must be inspected for asbestos in areas that may be disturbed during construction. Prior to approval, regulations require DOB to collect a form approved by DEP stating the investigation took place, unless exemption is selected on the PW1 tab.

- a) If your building was constructed per plans approved on or after April 1, 1987, your project is exempt from asbestos inspections and fees. The exemption option may be selected on the PW1 tab, as applicable.  
(Skip to Step 2).
- b) If not, a Special Asbestos Investigator completes an investigation to determine if asbestos-containing material (ACM) exists in the work area.

See additional information regarding asbestos requirements and Title 15, Chapter 1 of the Rules of the City of New York on [Department of Environmental Protection's website](#)

## Step 1A: Hire a Special Investigator to Complete Survey Report (as applicable)

After the investigation, the Special Asbestos Investigator will submit a survey report through DEP's online Asbestos Reporting and Tracking System (ARTS) and pay the fees. In addition to the DEP submission in ARTS, an ACP5 or ACP21 form with a DEP approved seal will be issued and will be required for submission with the solar construction permit application to DOB.

- a) If asbestos containing material exists in less than 25 linear square feet of the work area, the ACP5 form is completed in ARTS. This is the most common outcome. The Applicant would select the applicable statement on the PW1 stating the scope of the work is not an asbestos project – and provide the required NYC DEP Control #.
- b) If asbestos must be removed, the ACP7 form is completed in ARTS, and a [Certified Asbestos Handler](#) must remove it. An ACP21 form would be issued and sealed by DEP after removal. The option identifying the scope of work as requiring asbestos abatement may be selected on the PW1 tab.

## Step 2: Access DOB NOW: Build

All new solar filings must be submitted in DOB NOW: Build (BIS filings are no longer accepted). DOB NOW: Build requires an NYC.ID account. You can use the same email and password used for an eFiling account but will need to create a NYC.ID account to log in to DOB NOW.

Applications may be created by registered Filing Representatives but must be submitted to DOB by a NYS Registered Architect or Professional Engineer, as the Applicant of Record. The Applicant and Owner use their accounts to certify required [statements and signatures](#) on the application.

## Step 3: Create online application – select Job, Work & Review Types

It is important to accurately identify the appropriate Job Type, Work Type, and Review Type for your project at the beginning of the filing. These selections cannot be changed later.

JOB TYPE: Solar is filed as an **Alteration** Job Type. The Alteration can be the Initial filing or as a Subsequent filing for New Building and Alteration-CO jobs. Solar may be included in a New Building application but requires a separate filing if the owner is pursuing the Solar Property Tax Abatement.

WORK TYPE: **Solar**, is a designated Work Type in DOB NOW: Build.

REVIEW TYPE (select one):

- a) The **Standard Plan Review** includes review from a DOB Plan Examiner.
- b) **Professional Certification** is selected when the licensed Applicant (PE/RA) is professionally certifying the application and plans comply with all applicable requirements for the DOB plan exam review. **These jobs are subject to an audit by DOB.**

**Once these options are selected, DOB NOW: Build will have you confirm your choices before proceeding to Job Filing Details.**

**Note: Energy Storage Batteries** – Battery installations, paired with or without a solar installation, require a separate application with DOB, and FDNY as applicable. Guidance regarding [Electric Energy Storage Equipment \(EESSE\)](#) filing requirements is available from DOB & CUNY's Guidance Documents at [SmartDGHub.com](http://SmartDGHub.com).

## Step 4: Enter Job Filing Details

For Solar jobs, the below tabs will be available in DOB NOW: Build:

- Plans/Work (PW1)
- Zoning Information
- Scope of Work / Solar
- Tax Abatement (if applicable)
- Cost Affidavit (PW3)
- Technical Report (TR1/4/5/5H)
- Documents
- Statements and Signatures

**Note:** You must select “yes” to the question on the PW1 tab “Are you providing property tax abatement information with this filing?” for the Tax Abatement tab to appear.

**Tip:** Many of the specific address, site characteristic, and zoning information required filing can be found on the NYC Department of City Planning’s interactive Zoning and Land Use Map, known as [ZoLa](#), or through NYC DOB’s Buildings Information System, known as [BIS](#), on the Property Profile page through the [Building Information Search](#).

## Step 5: Create Architectural & Electrical Plans

Follow DOB [Drawing Standards](#) and [Plan Examination Guidelines](#). A NYS Registered Architect or Professional Engineer must stamp all pages and ensure compliance with all applicable Codes and Zoning regulations. See NYC DOB's [Design Professional Requirements: Alterations](#) for further details based on site/building type.

- Plot plan must show the location of buildings, indicate streets, trees, structures, city services, utilities, site hazards and adjacent buildings.
- Site plan, roof plan, and elevations must show the proposed solar modules, other equipment, structures, and roof elevation details for the building and any adjacent buildings. Plans show adequate detail and dimensions sufficient to confirm compliance with Zoning, Fire Code, and other pertinent requirements.
- Show the location of the Main Meter, AC Disconnect Switch and Inverter(s).
- Include height and setback requirements for the specific Zoning District to verify Zoning compliance.
- Structural & Wind Analysis statements
- Full Racking System and Anchorage details to be listed as an assembly, including structural criteria.
- Fire Code & Energy Analysis/NYCECC Compliance details (see Steps 5A & 5B below)
- If applicable, details for any Personal Fall Arrest Systems. See [BB2023-008](#) for more details.
- If applicable, show Flood Hazard compliance, including FIRM/PFIRM maps, substantial improvement calculations, BFE, DFE and other flood lines on elevations.

### Step 5A: Ensure Compliance with 2022 NYC Fire Code & 2020 NYC Energy Conservation Code

#### 2022 NYC Fire Code

Solar filings in full compliance with NYC Fire Code requirements do not need to file a separate application with FDNY. Fire Code compliance must be shown on the DOB plan submittal including access landings, fire access path and railings, as required.

- Ensure your application is in compliance with the 2022 NYC Fire Code. FDNY details fire apparatus access and rooftop access requirements in [Chapter 5 of the 2022 NYC Fire Code](#).
- The Applicant must ensure compliance with any previously approved Rooftop Access Variances at the site. Building Owners may [request records from FDNY](#). Any proposed solar installation on a rooftop with an existing Rooftop Access Variance must file another variance application with FDNY showing the proposed equipment/changes on the rooftop and receive approval prior to filing their DOB application.
- Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the DOB filing shows that the proposed solar application is in compliance with the Fire Code. All required clear paths, access and landings

must be shown with dimensions and drawn to scale. Show all required markings/placards on the plans. If you are unable to comply with all requirements of the Fire Code, either due to existing conditions or the proposed installation, you must apply for and receive approval from FDNY before filing your application with DOB.

- **FDNY Variance Application Process (if required) & Additional Fire Code Resources:**
  - To request a variance to the Fire Code for your project, file a [Rooftop Access Variance](#) directly with FDNY online, and pay the \$420 application fee.
  - If FDNY approves your variance request, they will issue a Letter of Acceptance which must be submitted to DOB with the online application.
  - See FDNY’s [2014/2022 NYC Fire Code Cross-Reference Table](#) & [2022 Fire Code Highlight Summary](#) for helpful details regarding changes to the 2022 Fire Code.

## 2020 NYC Energy Conservation Code

Solar jobs must typically comply with the NYCECC, because penetrations are being made in the roof and/or walls.

Applicants must answer required questions on the application and include a tabular energy analysis listed on the plans.

*Sample tabular energy analysis*

Figure 1: Sample tabular energy analysis:

| ENERGY ANALYSIS  |  |                                    |   |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---|
| Code chapter and/or standard used for design<br>Climate Zone 4A                                    |  |                                    |   |
| Item Description   | Code Prescriptive Value & Citation   | Proposed Design Value              | Supporting Documentation  |
| (List all elements of the scope of work in the detail that they are addressed by the energy code.) | List the prescriptive value required by the Energy Code and provide the citation for such value. | List the value used in the design. | Indicate where in the drawing set the information is to be found. |

*example from RCNY 5000-01.*

Applicants must determine if a building is considered **residential or commercial** as per the definitions in the NYCECC. Appropriate Residential or Commercial statements should be included on the plans, and special inspections must be identified.

Please see [RCNY 5000-01](#) & [NYC Energy Conservation Code](#) for full codes and additional resources.

## Step 6: Upload Plans and any Required Documentation

Upload plans online through DOB NOW: Build.

Certain projects specifics or characteristics may require additional required documentation to be uploaded with the application, such as:

- FDNY Letter of Acceptance for approved variance applications,
- Public Design Commission (PDC) approval for City-owned properties, excluding NYCHA
- Certificate of No Effect/ Certificate of Appropriateness for Landmark buildings/districts

**Note:** *If the property is a Landmark or located in a designated Historic District, you will need to receive a permit from the [NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission](#) (LPC) prior to submitting the DOB permit application. If required, the LPC approval must be submitted to DOB during the initial filing. The Property Profile Overview page in [BIS](#) can be used to determine the property's landmark status. LPC offers a [permit application guide](#), which details the application process and requirements. Solar installations are addressed in [RCNY Title 63, Chapter 2](#).*

## Step 7: Submit Electrical Permit Application

Only a licensed NYC Master Electrician can file an [Electrical Permit Application](#), known as the ED16A, with DOB. The application is filed through DOB NOW: Build and must be associated as a Related Job to the solar filing. The Category of Work should be “Sustainable Energy Installs” and “Photo Voltaic” should be selected as the Sustainable Type in the Electrical Scope of Work. The NYC Master Electrician must work for a NYC Registered Electrical Firm.

**Note:** You must enter the Electrical Job number as a ‘Related’ Job on the PW1 tab prior to submitting the Alteration Application to DOB. If you do not enter Electrical Job number on the initial filing, you will need to file a PAA to add it as a related job prior to Permit.

## Step 8: Pay Permit Fees and Submit Application to DOB

Fees, calculated based on the cost and other project characteristics, must be paid before submitting the application. Anyone can pay required fees for the application, but only the Applicant, a NYS Registered Architect or Professional Engineer, can submit the job filing through DOB NOW: Build.

Please see [DOB's Step-by-Step Guide to Pay Fees & Preview to File \(Submit\)](#) for further details regarding how to pay permit fees and submit your application to DOB.

Further details regarding filing and permit fee structures are available in Article 112, within [Chapter 1 of the General Administrative Provisions of the 2022 Construction Codes](#).

## Step 9: Plan Acceptance/Review

If the application is filed Professional Certification by the Applicant, the job filing is accepted, **subject to a DOB audit.**

If a Plan Examination is requested, a Plan Examiner will issue Objections if there is anything that needs to be addressed before approving your application.

## Step 10: Submit the Tenant Protection Plan (as applicable) & Solar Work Permit Issuance

Once the job application is accepted/approved, a Tenant Protection Plan (TPP) must be submitted and approved for any building that indicates the building will be occupied during construction on the PW1 tab, prior to permit issuance.

Additionally, the Electrical (EL) permit must be issued prior to the Solar Work Permit being requested by a General Contractor (GC). The work permit and Occupant Notice, as applicable, must be displayed on the job site during construction.

Once the permit has been issued, **any job requiring a TPP must submit 72 hour notification prior to the start of work through DOB NOW, and distribute TPP Notice to Occupants**, as required by code. Any filing stakeholder (Filing Representative, Building Owner, Applicant or GC) can submit the notification by selecting '+Notifications' and then 'Tenant Protection Plan 72 Hour'.

See [DOB's Tenant Protection Plan](#) page for additional information and requirements.

**Note:** For properties with stop work orders, no permits can be approved until the violating conditions are corrected and certified as corrected to DOB. For more information please see DOB's [Stop Work Order](#) page. Once the corrections are certified, the Borough Commissioner's Borough Office can lift or rescind the stop work order. For buildings with open violations and no stop work orders, applicants are allowed to make an override request, provided that the work is not in the same area as or otherwise related to the violating condition. This would allow solar work to be permitted. This is NRV or, "No Relationship to the Violation", on the L2 request. See DOB's [L2 Requests](#) page for additional information.

## Step 11: Complete Progress & Special Inspections

An Energy Progress Inspection and Special Inspections will need to be completed prior to the final inspection. The Energy Progress Inspection is often completed by the NYS PE/RA and the Special Inspections are completed by the Special Inspector listed on the Technical Reports. A NYS PE/RA can become a Special Inspector, but they cannot work directly for the General Contractor. They must work for their own firm and Special Inspection Agency as they are inspecting as a third party to the contractor.

## Step 12: Request Electrical Inspection

Schedule the electrical inspection through [DOB NOW: Inspections](#).

The project must pass the electrical inspection from DOB before requesting the final utility interconnection acceptance letter, also known as Permission to Operate (PTO).

## Step 13: Complete Final Inspection

Certain work types, including Solar, require the Applicant to perform the final inspection as detailed in [BB2018-008](#).

## Step 14: Request Project Sign-Off

Alteration job filings do not impact the Certificate of Occupancy, and result in a Letter of Completion (LOC) upon sign-off of the job.

**Note:** A Post Approval Amendment (PAA) may be required if changes are made after a filing is accepted/approved. If required, you must submit the PAA and have it approved prior to inspection and project sign-off requests. See [DOB's PAA](#) page for applicability & process details.

Before requesting an LOC ensure the following items are completed in DOB NOW: Build:

- **Cost Affidavit (PW3): Final Cost must be verified.**
- **Tax Abatement: Final (if applicable) must be verified.**
- **Any Required Documents, including final Utility Letter of Acceptance/Permission to Operate (PTO), must be uploaded.**
- **Final Technical Reports must be certified.**
- **All construction and electrical permits must be inspected and be in Signed-Off status.**

The LOC is requested through DOB NOW: Build under 'Select Action' and select 'Request LOC'.

## Step 15: Review Construction Sign-Off & Letter of Completion

After the LOC request is submitted, DOB reviews the information and issues the Letter of Completion, as appropriate.

Once issued, the Filing Status will be reflected as 'LOC Issued' in DOB NOW and you can download the LOC from the 'Letter of Completion (PW7)' tab within the Public Portal. The job is now complete.

**Note: Once DOB sign-off is complete for a project that has filed for the Solar PTA, DOB will include it on a list of applications they send to the NYC Department of Finance (DOF) for processing. DOF then sends a letter to the property Owner stating the abatement has been approved, outlining the abatement amount, as well as the start and end dates of the tax abatement. Construction Sign-Off must be requested by March 15th for the abatement to be applied to the property Owner's taxes on July 1st of the same year.**

## Appendix of Additional Resources

**NY Solar Map and Portal:** Sustainable CUNY built and hosts the [NY Solar Map and Portal](#)- leveraging CUNY's IT and GIS mapping prowess. Sustainable CUNY's Ombudsman collaboratively work with NYC's Agencies Having Authorities (AHJ's) and utilities to create numerous permitting and guidance resources and tools for the solar and storage industry that can be found on the map.

**NYC DOB's Training Video:** [DOB NOW: Build – Electric Energy Storage Equipment \(EESE\)/Green Roof/Solar Training](#) The recording captures the October 2023 training regarding DOB NOW: *Build* procedures for EESE, Green Roof and Solar job filings.

**NYC DOB's Training Presentation Slides:** [DOB NOW: Build EESE \(Electric Energy Storage Equipment\), Solar, and Green Roof Job Filings](#) These slides accompanied the initial training and have been updated as of March 2024 to reflect current policies and procedures for Solar job filings in DOB NOW: Build.

**NYC DOB's [Solar FAQ](#):** Answers frequently asked questions regarding general solar filings and Solar Property Tax Abatement (PTA) information.

**NYC DOB's [BB2019-010](#):** Details solar and green roof requirements for new and existing buildings under Local Laws 92 and 94 of 2019 (LL92/94).

**NYC DOB's General DOB NOW Guide:** [DOB NOW Application User Guide](#) This guide updated 11/15/23 details general filing requirements applicable to all filings and job types. Solar specific details are contained in NYC DOB's [Step-by-Step Solar Job Filing Guide](#).

**Sustainable CUNY & Con Edison's Annual [NYC Solar + Storage Solar Installer Workshop](#):** This annual workshop is designed to support contractors, architects, engineers, electricians, filing representatives, and the stakeholder community who specialize in solar energy and/or energy storage systems in NYC. Presentations and recordings on permitting and interconnection processes are posted on the NY Solar Map, providing an opportunity to learn best practices with presentations direct from NYC's AHJs.

**ABOUT |** The Smart Distributed Generation (DG) Hub, established by Sustainable CUNY of the City University of New York in 2013, is a comprehensive effort to develop a strategic pathway to safe and effective solar and storage installations in New York City. The work of the DG Hub is supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA), the New York Power Authority (NYPA), and the City of New York. The DG Hub's Solar and Storage Ombudsmen are available as a technical assistance resource for stakeholders – reach out for assistance with your solar or storage project.

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