



City of Columbus
Mayor Michael B. Coleman

Department of Building & Zoning Services

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Construction Industry Communication #40

**From: Keith Wagenknecht, Chief Building Official
Columbus Dept. of Building & Zoning Services**

Re: Permit/Inspection Process – Photovoltaic (PV) Systems

Date: December 15, 2011

Requirements: The Ohio Building Code (OBC) requires all *Building Services Equipment* to be inspected per OBC 108.2.9. The *Building Services Equipment* designation encompasses those electrical systems located within or for use by building operations including any Photovoltaic Systems (PV) being installed. Additionally, *Building Services Equipment* are required to comply with the plan approval process as designated within OBC 107 and the inspection process designated within OBC 108 including any special inspections deemed necessary by the Chief Building Official per OBC 108.2.11 & OBC 1704.13.

Background: Due to the inherent nature of PV Systems necessitating the use of sunlight for optimum operation, the majority of this equipment is located in elevations that increase the hazards for inspections, requires specialized training and equipment to inspect safely and increases the time necessary to successfully complete. The City of Columbus has established procedures to comply with these requirements which will not adversely affect customer service levels expected by both the electrical industry and the citizens of Columbus.

Memorandum: The following shall be utilized for permit and inspection procedures for all PV Systems installed within the City of Columbus;

- Plans sealed by a design professional registered in the State of Ohio are required to be submitted for approval in accordance with OBC 107 / RCO 106.
 - The documentation within the expedited permit process for PV Systems will be required to be utilized for plans to be accepted for review, see link below.
<http://brooksolar.com/files/Expermitprocess3.pdf>
 - All standard plan review fees will apply as identified within the Building and Zoning Services (BZS) Fee Schedule.
- A special inspector will be designated by the permit applicant to perform the required special inspections of the PV System.
 - Documentation will be required to be submitted by permit applicant to the Chief Building Official for review.

- Documentation will identify the qualified individual or entity.
- Documentation shall substantiate the credentials of individual or entity as possessing the necessary expertise in PV Systems to perform such special inspections.
- The Chief Building Official will determine approval of the individual or entity to perform special inspections in accordance with OBC 1704.1 or RCO 109.3.6.
- Upon receipt of an approved plan review and a qualified special inspector, a City of Columbus electrical permit will be required to be obtained by the permit holder per CBC 4113.
 - All standard electric permit fees will apply as identified within the BZS Fee Schedule.
- Upon completion of all work identified within the approved construction documents, a special inspection will be required by the qualified special inspector.
 - Documentation will be required to be prepared by the approved special inspection entity verifying the installation to be in accordance with the approved construction drawings.
- Upon completion of all the above items, a final electrical inspection performed by a certified City of Columbus BZS electrical inspector will be requested by the permit holder for the project.
 - All work, per the approved plans, must be completed
 - Approved plans are required to be on-site at the time of inspection.
 - Documentation from the special inspection is required to be on-site at the time of the inspection.
 - BZS electrical inspector will approve/deny PV System final inspection.