

# City of Bellingham Policy

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**Policy No. 2014-001**

**Title: Roof Mounted Photo-Voltaic Solar Panels for One and Two Family Dwellings**

**Code: 2012 International Residential Code**

**Chapter: M2302**

**Level of Policy: Departmental**

**Date Issued: August 13, 2014**

**Developed by: Jim Tinner, CBO**

**Date Revised: JET**

**Revised by: N/A**

**Approved by:**

Supersedes: 2009-001

See Also:

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## Purpose

To assist and encourage private electric generation capability while assuring that such electric generation capability does not create structural, fire or life safety hazards as well as to bring City policy into compliance with Washington State Building Code Council (SBCC) emergency rule. The emergency rule adopts the structural portions of the 2009 City of Bellingham policy #2009-001 with the exception of a weight limit. Bellingham's policy restricted the total weight of PV systems to 1,000 pounds. The state did not adopt that limitation.

## Scope

Single-family, two-family and townhome buildings which fall under the scope of the International Residential Code.

## Definitions

PV means Photo-Voltaic

## Policy/Conditions

The installation of roof mounted PV solar panels meeting all of the following criteria will not create a requirement for structural review or a building permit.

- Total dead load of panels, supports, mountings, raceways and all other appurtenances weighs no more than four pounds per square foot.
- ~~The total PV solar panel system weight will not exceed 1,000 pounds.~~
- Panels are to be mounted no higher than 18" above the plain of the roof to which they are affixed.
- Supports are installed to spread the dead load across as many roof framing members as needed to ensure that no point loads in excess of fifty pounds are created.
- Attachment to the roof will be as specified by the mounting system manufacturer.
- All portions of the system must remain at or below height limitations of any code or regulation enforced by the City of Bellingham.
- Electric permits and inspection approvals are required for all PV installations that connect to the building's electric system.

## References/Sources

Solar Guide for Residential Buildings - City of Portland, OR

Installation of Roof Mounted Solar Panels, revised June 17, 2009 – Clackamas County, OR

**Appendix/Attachments**