



Yakima County Fire Marshal's Office Public Information Handout FP-6 Solar Photovoltaic Power Panels



International Fire Code 1205

Solar electrical systems in private homes generate power that helps offset a portion of the power supplied by the utility company. Photovoltaic solar panels are a way to generate power, making it cleaner for the environment. The following information is designed for single-family homes, two-family homes, and townhomes as defined by the International Residential Code.

Firefighter Accessibility

Roof access points and pathways for firefighters are required.

Why?

A normal practice in the fire service is to open a roof to allow heated gases and smoke to escape from a structure that is on fire. This practice speeds the search for victims and firefighting efforts, and increases firefighter safety, as well as increasing survivability of the victims. Access points give firefighter a way to get to where they need to go in order to properly ventilate the structure.



Firefighter Accessibility Requirements

- Roof access points must be located at strong points of building construction, in areas that do not require ground ladders to be placed over windows or doors, or overhead obstructions like trees, wires, or signs.
- Each Photovoltaic array is limited to 150 feet in either direction.
- Multiple arrays must be separated by a 36-inch-wide clear access pathway.
- Panels and modules on roofs with hips and valleys must not be located less than 18 inches from a hip or valley where solar equipment is to be placed on both sides of the hip or valley. Where panels or modules are only on one side of the hip or valley, they may be placed directly adjacent to the hip or valley, except on roof slopes of 2:12 or less.
- Panels and modules must be a minimum of 18 inches from the ridge in order to accommodate fire department ventilation operations.

General Solar Photovoltaic Power Panel layout Requirements

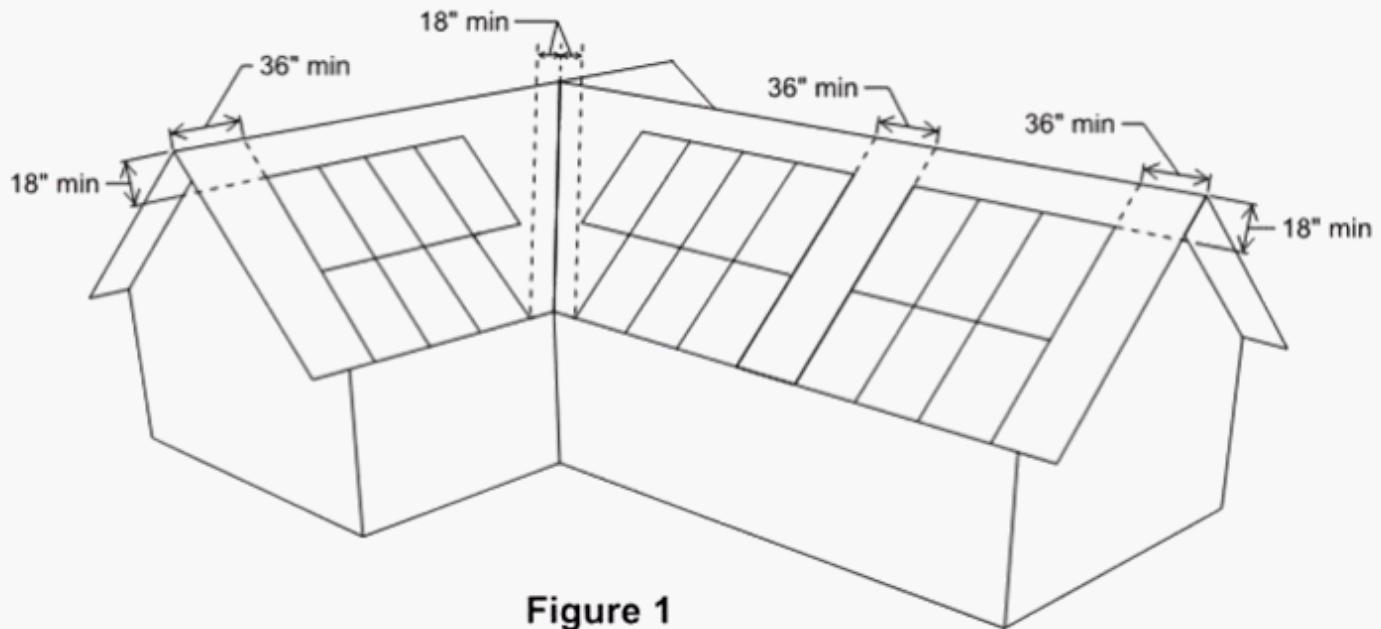


Figure 1

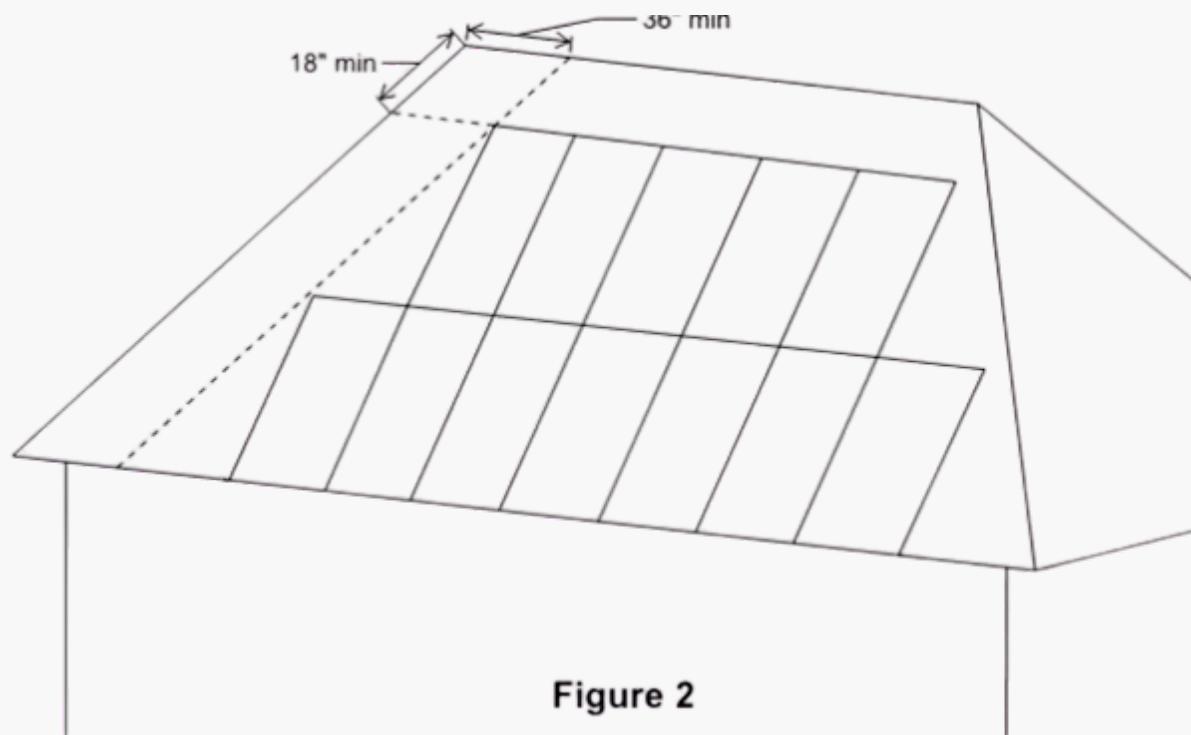


Figure 2

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact Yakima County Building and Fire Safety at (509) 574-2300.