

Solar panels

A General Guide and Planning Checklist for Residents and Industry



Are you considering installing solar panels on your home or business?

The City of Port Phillip (Council) is committed to the creation of a sustainable built environment and encourages the development and installation of renewable energy systems, including photovoltaic and solar hot water systems.

To ensure the planning process achieves better environmental outcomes that are also financially viable, socially cohesive and culturally relevant, Council strongly recommends consideration be given to the following:



- Unless it can be successfully integrated into the design of the building, every effort should be made to minimise the visibility of a system from the street, and its impact on surrounding properties and public areas.
- A planning permit will typically be required if the system is visible from a street (other than a lane) or a public park, and is within a heritage or neighbourhood character overlay under the Port Phillip Planning Scheme.
- If the system is visible from the street, provide a letter from a qualified professional installer stating that the proposed location is the most optimal for the performance of the system.
- The historic fabric of a building should not be unnecessarily disturbed or destroyed, in line with minimum intervention and reversibility principles. That is, when a system is removed the building should be able to be fully restored.
- Solar panels, tanks and other infrastructure should not display any form of private advertising or branding.
- Avoid placing the system on or near the property boundary without first obtaining consent from the adjoining property owner(s).
- Shadows produced by the system and any associated structure should be minimised. Less bulky systems installed flush with the roof line are preferred.
- To ensure operational effectiveness, all panels should be positioned to avoid overshadowing from nearby buildings, trees and power lines/poles.
- The ideal placement for photovoltaic and solar hot water systems in Melbourne is an unshaded roof pitch of 30°, facing due north. Although, there is scope for some degree of variation from this ideal.
- Consider other conservation and efficiency measures (additional insulation, energy-efficient light bulbs, low-flow showerheads, etc.).
- Ensure that the system is installed by a qualified professional, accredited by the Clean Energy Council.

Please Note: satisfying these considerations does not guarantee approval of any planning application.

Unlawful installations

Council's Planning Compliance team actively investigates unlawful works within the municipality, in particular those in violation of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme. Penalties apply for photovoltaic and/or solar hot water systems installed where approval is required but not obtained. Council may demand that such unlawful systems be removed at the owner's expense.

Solar Panel Checklist for Planning Permit Applications

This document is intended to assist you in obtaining a planning permit for:

- **Solar hot water panels (attached to the building or dwelling which it services)**
- **Photovoltaic (electric) panels**

A planning permit is not required where the solar panel is not visible from a street (other than a lane) or public park.

As part of Council's commitment towards environmental sustainability the application fee typically associated with obtaining a planning permit will not be required for applications to install solar panels. These are typically processed through our Fast Track service and completed in less than 3 weeks.

To ensure that we can process your application as quickly as possible, please read the following carefully and ensure that you have provided all the necessary documentation. If you are unclear on any aspect of your application please contact our Fast Track Planner to discuss your proposal.

Your application must include the following items, otherwise your application will not be lodged.

- A fully completed **Application for Planning Permit form**.
 - Ensure you have entered the correct address of the land, an accurate description of your proposal, a current email address and phone number, that the Applicant address is the correct postal address, and that the form is signed and dated.
- A full and current copy of the **Certificate of Title** (dated within 3 months of your application), including the title plan/diagram showing any relevant covenants and restrictions. Provide confirmation that the present boundaries are the same as the title boundaries.
- Drawings (plans)** including but not limited to the existing and proposed conditions. Include the immediate context of your site.
 - Drawings must be A3 size, include dimensioned setbacks, include a north arrow (not required on elevations), be to scale (i.e. 1:100 @ A3), and include a scale bar.

Further information

Before commencing any works please contact Statutory Planning on 9209 6424 or email planhelp@portphillip.vic.gov.au to determine if a permit is required for your proposal and if any specific requirements apply.

A building permit may also be required for the installation of your system, for more information contact Building Solutions on 9209 6253 or email helpbuilding@portphillip.vic.gov.au.

For more information on photovoltaic and solar hot water systems please contact Sustainable Policy or the Sustainable Design Officer on 9209 6229 or email sustainabledesign@portphillip.vic.gov.au.

How to apply

All application forms, plans and supporting documentation must be submitted in electronic form (e.g. PDF, image, Word document, etc). Hardcopy applications are not accepted.

The easiest way submit your application is to **apply and pay online**. If an application fee applies it is calculated automatically. Please visit <http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/apply-for-planning-permit.htm> for links to apply online, or alternative options.

For most applications the fee is determined by the cost of the development. Refer to the Planning Fee Schedule and if unsure please contact Planning Business Support at planhelp@portphillip.vic.gov.au or 9209 6424.