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## DIVISION OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

*Department of Permits and Inspections*

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# Residential Rooftop Solar Panel Guide

Applications should be submitted electronically via the citizen portal at  
<https://planningandpermitting.frederickcountymd.gov/>

## Submittal Requirements

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1. Current code edition in effect is 2018 IRC, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. All of Section R324 applies except as amended by this document.
2. Permits approved prior to August 15, 2018 are not required to comply with access requirements. Revisions to such permits after this approval date shall comply with current code requirements.
3. Any roof that could contain habitable space beneath it must comply with access requirements.
4. Non-habitable accessory structures (detached one-story garages, sheds, barns, etc.) are not required to comply with access requirements.
5. Submitted plans that do not comply with access requirements shall be denied for revision and resubmission.
6. Access pathways including at the ridge must be clearly marked and dimensioned on a roof plan.
7. At least 36" of clear roof space shall be provided around all solid fuel-burning chimneys for emergency access and maintenance.
8. Multiple roof access points and roof planes shall be considered as access areas where complex roofs are involved.
9. At least one access pathway must be clear of doors, windows, and openings below.
10. Roof planes are considered the same if the vertical difference in heights is 30" or less.
11. Small gables and dormers (decorative or over-framed areas) can contain solar panels without access or clearances to the ridge.
12. Townhouse roofs may have panels extending to the edge of the end unit (exterior wall), but access requirements must still be satisfied.
13. Where the roof planes of each unit are contiguous, townhouse roofs shall have 18" minimum clearance on each side of the party wall (see #10 above).

14. A central access pathway, minimum 48” wide, shall be sufficient for ridge access providing the opposite roof plane is accessible. The beginning of this pathway cannot be located over egress windows or doors.
15. Ridge clearance may be reduced to 18” wide so long as the opposite roof plane is accessible and does not contain solar panels.
16. Vents and other obstacles are not recommended to occur within the access pathways. If undue hardships require vents and other small obstacles to be located within the access pathway, the access pathway shall not be reduced to less than 24” in clear width.
17. Vents and other roof penetrations used for ventilation must be unobstructed by solar panels and hardware.
18. Unique conditions or obstacles should be discussed with Plan Review staff prior to permit application and a solution agreeable to both parties shall be allowed providing the solution meets the intent of the code.
19. Approved permit drawings must be present on-site during field inspection. Photographs of the installation shall be furnished to the inspector upon request either in physical or electronic form. These photographs shall depict access aiseways with clearances measured, rail attachments in the attic, grounding connections, etc.

Updated 12/22/2022