

(Effective July 1, 2020)

WAC 51-11C-41100 Section C411—Solar readiness.

C411.1 General. A solar zone shall be provided on nonresidential buildings that are 20 stories or less in height above grade plan. The solar zone shall be located on the roof of the building or on another structure elsewhere on the site. The solar zone shall be in accordance with Sections C411.2 through C411.8 and the *International Fire Code*.

EXCEPTION: A solar zone is not required where the solar exposure of the building's roof area is less than 75 percent of that of an unshaded area, as defined in Section C411.5, in the same location, as measured by one of the following:

1. Incident solar radiation expressed in kWh/ft²-yr using typical meteorological year (TMY) data.
2. Annual sunlight exposure expressed in cumulative hours per year using TMY data.
3. Shadow studies indicating that the roof area is more than 25 percent in shadow, on September 21st at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 12 p.m., 1 p.m., and 2 p.m. solar time.

C411.2 Minimum area. The minimum area of the solar zone shall be determined by one of the following methods, whichever results in the smaller area:

1. 40 percent of roof area. The roof area shall be calculated as the horizontally projected gross roof area less the area covered by skylights, occupied roof decks and planted areas.
2. 20 percent of electrical service size. The electrical service size is the rated capacity of the total of all electrical services to the building, and the required solar zone size shall be based upon 10 peak watts of photovoltaic per square foot.

EXCEPTION: Subject to the approval of the code official, buildings with extensive rooftop equipment that would make full compliance with this section impractical shall be permitted to reduce the size of the solar zone required by Section C411.2 to the maximum practicable area.

C411.3 Contiguous area. The solar zone is permitted to be comprised of separated subzones. Each subzone shall be at least 5 feet wide in the narrowest dimension.

C411.4 Obstructions. The solar zone shall be free of pipes, vents, ducts, HVAC equipment, skylights and other obstructions, except those serving photovoltaic systems within the solar zone. The solar zone is permitted to be located above any such obstructions, provided that the racking for support of the future system is installed at the time of construction, the elevated solar zone does not shade other portions of the solar zone, and its height is permitted by the *International Building Code*. Photovoltaic or solar water heating systems are permitted to be installed within the solar zone.

C411.5 Shading. The solar zone shall be set back from any existing or new object on the building or site that is located south, east or west of the solar zone a distance at least two times the object's height above the nearest point on the roof surface. Such objects include, but are not limited to, taller portions of the building itself, parapets, chimneys, antennas, signage, rooftop equipment, trees, and roof plantings. No portion of the solar zone shall be located on a roof slope greater than 2:12 that faces within 45 degrees of true north.

C411.6 Access. Areas contiguous to the solar zone shall provide access pathways and provisions for emergency smoke ventilation as required by the *International Fire Code*.

C411.7 Structural integrity. The as-designed dead load and live load for the solar zone shall be clearly marked on the record drawings and shall accommodate future photovoltaic system arrays at an assumed dead load of 4 pounds per square foot in addition to other required live and dead loads. A location for future inverters shall be designated

either within or adjacent to the solar zone, with a minimum area of 2 square feet for each 1000 square feet of solar zone area, and shall accommodate an assume dead load of 175 pounds per square foot. Where photovoltaic systems are installed in the solar zone, structural analysis shall be based upon calculated loads, not upon these assumed loads.

C411.8 Photovoltaic interconnection. Interconnection of the future photovoltaic system shall be provided for at the main service panel, either ahead of the service disconnecting means or at the end of the bus opposite the service disconnecting means, in one of the following forms:

1. A space for the mounting of a future overcurrent device, sized to accommodate the largest standard rated overcurrent device that is less than 20 percent of the bus rating.

2. Lugs sized to accommodate conductors with an ampacity of at least 20 percent of the bus rating, to enable the mounting of an external overcurrent device for interconnection.

The electrical construction documents shall indicate all of the following:

1. Solar zone boundaries and access pathways.

2. Location for future inverters and metering equipment.

3. Route for future wiring between the photovoltaic panels and the inverter, and between the inverter and the main service panel.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 19.27A.020, 19.27A.025, 19.27A.160 and chapter 19.27 RCW. WSR 19-24-040, § 51-11C-41100, filed 11/26/19, effective 7/1/20.]