

South Down Recreation Association (SDRA) Solar Panel Installation Policy for All SDRA Living Units

Effective Date: January 24, 2026

Approved By: Southdown Building Committee and South Down Council

1. Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines for the installation and maintenance of solar energy systems (“solar panels”) on all homes* within the South Down Community to balance homeowners’ rights to renewable energy with the community’s interest in preserving neighborhood aesthetics, safety, and property values.

2. Applicability

This policy applies to all homeowners within the South Down Community who wish to install, replace or remove rooftop solar panels. It does not govern ground-mounted solar installations, which are **not permitted** unless separately approved by the South Down Building Committee and Southdown Council. Village homes and common property are subject to their own association rules and regulations, which may be far more restrictive, as well as South Down Building Committee and Southdown Council approval.

3. General Requirements

Homeowners may install solar panels subject to the following guidelines:

3.1. Structural Safety

- Homeowners must provide a **structural assessment and certification** from a licensed engineer or contractor verifying that the roof can support the added weight and installation of solar panels.
- All installations must comply with applicable **local, state, and federal building codes** and **manufacturer specifications**.

3.2. Location and Visibility

- Solar panels are allowed to be placed on **roof surfaces that are not visible from community streets****.

3.3. Aesthetic Standards

- Panels, framing, conduits, and wiring must:
 - Be **black, dark gray, or color-matched** to the existing roof.
- Be installed **flush or close to the roof surface** to maintain a low-profile appearance and specify mounting style and details.
 - Avoid exposed wiring or visible equipment.

3.4. Glare and Reflection

- Panels must be **anti-reflective** and designed to **minimize glare** toward streets, neighbors, and common areas.
 - If a neighbor reports significant glare, the Southdown Executive Committee reserves the right to request an independent inspection and require corrective measures if necessary.
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4. Approval Process

Before installation, homeowners must secure the required Building Permits from the City of Laconia. Homeowners must contact the Code Enforcement / Building Department (603) 527-1293. At a minimum, the following are required to secure a Building Permit:

- **Electrical Permit:** An electrical permit is mandatory for all residential installations in Laconia. This ensures that the system is installed to current safety and electrical codes.
- **Adherence to state-level fire and structural codes.** This includes but is not limited to:
 - **Ridge Setback:** A minimum of 18-inch setback from the roof's ridge, unless otherwise approved by the local fire official
 - **Roof Coverage:** Solar panel arrays cannot cover more than 50% of the home's total aggregate roof area.
 - **Access Pathways:** Clear pathways for firefighters to access the roof.
- **Professional Engineer Review:** All rooftop solar installations must be reviewed and stamped by a New Hampshire licensed professional engineer.
- **Inspections:** Your project will require a rough-in and final inspection. These should be scheduled with the Building Department.
- Depending on the details of your property, your project could also be subject to review by other city boards.
- **Interconnection with Utilities:** You must work with a qualified installer and obtain permits, then submit an interconnection application to the Utility Company.
- **Dig Safe** – if for some reason, any underground excavation is required, Dig Safe must be called 72 hours in advance of the work starting.

After securing the appropriate permits from the City of Laconia, homeowners **must submit an application using the Minor Revision Application (MRA) document**, to the **South Down Building Committee**. Additional documents as follows are required and must accompany the MRA for proper South Down Building Committee review.

1. **Site Plan & Roof Diagram** – showing panel placement and proof that placement is not visible from community streets**.

2. **Structural Certification from a licensed Engineer or Contractor** – verifying roof load capacity.
3. **Panel Specifications** – including model, color, anti-reflective rating, and mounting system.
4. **Installer Credentials** – proof of licensing, insurance, and permitting compliance.
5. **Abutter notification** – confirmation that abutting homeowners have been notified of the project and schedule.
6. **Schedule** – start date, duration and estimated completion date.

The South Down Building Committee will respond within **30 days** of receiving complete application.

5. Maintenance & Removal

- Any exterior electrical lines mounted to the siding of the home must have a pvc cover that matches the color of the exterior siding or be painted the same color to match.
 - Homeowners are responsible for keeping panels in **good repair** and ensuring they do not become damaged, unsafe, or unsightly.
 - If a panel system falls into disrepair, creates safety hazards, or produces excessive glare, the Executive Committee may require prompt corrective action.
 - Upon **roof replacement or home sale**, homeowners must ensure the solar system remains compliant with this policy.
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6. Indemnification & Liability

The SDRA assumes **no responsibility** for:

- Damage to solar systems caused by weather, maintenance, or third parties.
- Structural or roofing issues arising from installation, operation or maintenance.
- Damage to any property including but not limited to neighboring properties and SDRA properties arising from the installation, operation and maintenance of the solar system.

Homeowners are required to:

- Maintain appropriate **insurance coverage** for their solar panels.
 - Indemnify and hold harmless the SDRA from claims arising from their installation.
 - Be fully responsible for any damage caused by their solar system, including but not limited to neighboring properties, common areas or SDRA maintained structures. Homeowners must take prompt corrective action and reimburse the SDRA for any costs it incurs to remedy such damage.
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7. Enforcement

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Fines per the SDRA's enforcement procedures.
- Revocation of installation approval.
- Requirement to modify or remove non-compliant panels at the homeowner's expense.

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8. Compliance with State & Local Laws

If state or local laws governing solar installations provide additional homeowner protection, this policy shall be interpreted to **comply with the most restrictive applicable requirements** while still honoring homeowners' rights.

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9. Amendment

The Council and the South Down Building Committee reserve the right to amend this policy as technology, legal standards, or community needs evolve.

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10. Acknowledgement

SDRA Building Committee Policy and Procedures, Page 3, Article 2 – Reliance on prior approvals – No party may assume that because a particular design or site feature was previously approved for one home, unit or location, it will automatically be approved for another. Because of impact on adjoining properties, and for other reasons, all designs or styles are not appropriate to all locations.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the SDRA Solar Panel Policy and will comply with requirements of this policy in its entirety. Further, I take full responsibility for product and contractor selection, installation, and maintenance.

Homeowner Signature: _____

Homeowner Address: _____

Contractor Signature: _____

Contractor Name: _____

*Homes are defined as both Single-Family homes and Village homes.

**Community Streets are defined as both SDRA streets and Village streets.