



Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association

## Solar Installations in Oregon License & Program Information and Educational Opportunities

---

Businesses and individuals performing professional installation of solar systems in the state of Oregon have several important license requirements. This document covers licensing requirements, incentive program requirements, and educational opportunities.

*Please note that this is an introductory overview and not a definitive resource; individuals planning to pursue solar installation on a professional basis should contact the Oregon Building Codes Division at (503) 378-4133 or on the web at <http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/bcd/> for authoritative and current information on licensing requirements.*

### Contents

Solar License Requirements.....	2
Oregon Solar Electric License Requirements.....	3
National Solar Certification Requirements.....	3
Incentive Program Requirements.....	3
Energy Trust Trade Allies.....	3
Oregon Tax Credit Programs.....	4
Continuing Education Opportunities.....	4

### Questions? Comments?

*For any questions about this document or if you have questions not answered below, please contact OSEIA at (503) 236-0367 or on the web at [www.oseia.org](http://www.oseia.org).*



Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association

## Solar License Requirements

Oregon law requires trades people who install electrical or plumbing systems to meet minimum competency and licensing requirements. There are both general licenses which allow a trades person to do a wide range of work and specialty licenses which pertain to a limited scope of work and required skills. These licenses are intended to ensure the people doing the work understand the technology and appropriate building, plumbing and electrical codes that apply.

Oregon law also requires that the business which employs trades people to hold both a Construction and Contractor's Board (CCB) license and the trade appropriate license. Business licenses for electrical and plumbing systems are administered by the Building Codes Division of the Oregon Department of Business and Consumer Services. For more information go to <http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/bcd>.

Unlike most states, Oregon offers a set of specialty licenses geared toward the installation of solar systems as an alternative to requiring licensing as a full journeyman plumber or electrician. For more information on apprenticeships for these specialty solar installation programs, please contact Erik Westerholm of the Northwest Energy Education Program at Lane Community College or visit <http://www.oregonseia.org/ProfessionalTraining>.

## Solar Thermal License Requirements

*Solar systems fall into two general categories: solar thermal and solar electric or photovoltaic. The licensing requirements for each of these categories are slightly different.*

**Solar Thermal** systems consist mainly of hot water and heating systems, and are usually comprised of roof-mounted thermal collection systems as well as a heat exchanging tank and circulation system. Professional installation of these systems requires both business contractor licenses and an installer license:

### *Business license*

1. CCB License
2. Plumbing Business Registration

### *Installer license*

3. Licensure as either a journeyman Plumber or Solar Heating and Cooling Installer (Note that the STL license does not allow installation of the final connection to potable water plumbing)



Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association

## Oregon Solar Electric License Requirements

**Solar Electric** systems involve the installation of photovoltaic cells for the generation of electricity. Professional installation of these systems requires both business contractor licenses and an installer license:

### *Business license*

1. CCB License
2. General C or CLR license

### *Installer license*

3. Licensure as either a journeyman Electrician or Limited Renewable Energy Technician (note that the LRT license allows installation of up to 25kW and does not allow the final AC grid tie)

## National Solar Certification Requirements

The North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) is a non-profit organization that has established a third party credentialing and certification program for solar electric and solar thermal practitioners. NABCEP certification is not required by state agency or incentive program in Oregon. It is intended to provide a measurable benchmark for professional development that will give those with the certification a competitive advantage in the market place.

NABCEP offers two level of certification, an entry level certification verifies basic “book” understanding of the systems, and full certification which requires field experience and work performance review. An excellent (and free) study guide is available for both solar thermal and solar electric trades from their website at [www.nabcep.org](http://www.nabcep.org).

## Incentive Program Requirements

A number of financial incentive programs operate in Oregon for the installation of solar systems. These fall into two main categories, based on the administering entity.

### Energy Trust Trade Allies

The Energy Trust of Oregon offers a set of rebates for the installation of solar electric and solar thermal systems for both residential and commercial customers through their Trade Ally program. Becoming an Energy Trust trade ally requires program training, a contractor's license and insurance. For more information, please contact Kacia Brockman at the Energy Trust at 1-866-ENTRUST, and check their website at <http://www.energytrust.org/trade-ally/programs/solar/eligibility>.



Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association

## Oregon Tax Credit Programs

The state of Oregon also offers tax credits for solar installations for both business, the Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC), and residential, the Residential Energy Tax Credit (RETC). Commercial projects that wish to receive a BETC must be approved prior to beginning the project and must be properly engineered and installed by licensed electricians. Because residential tax credits have no prescreening, all installations must be commissioned and verified by a "Tax Credit Certified Technician" (TCCT). TCCT status can apply to anyone who has attended basic solar training and passed a technical and tax credit test administered by the Oregon Department of Energy. To learn more, please contact the solar department at ODOE at (503) 378-4040, and check their website at <http://www.oregon.gov/ENERGY>.

## Continuing Education Opportunities

IBEW: The IBEW offers solar electric installation training which is open to the public. In Portland, contact the NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center at (503) 262-9991, or check their site at <http://www.nietc.org>. Other training centers throughout the state offer additional training; look up your local IBEW for more information.

SEI: Solar Energy International offers a number of very high quality training courses and seminars on both solar electric and solar water heating in various locations around the country on a regular basis. SEI can be reached at (970) 963-8855, or on the web at <http://www.solarenergy.org>.

OSEIA: The Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association offers installer training opportunities throughout the year, including classes after each quarterly meeting and a slate of courses available at the NW Solar Expo. For more information, please visit the website at <http://www.oseia.org>.

RE JATC: The Renewable Energy Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (RE JATC) offers several apprenticeship programs for the installation of solar electric and thermal systems. These programs are on a rotating opening schedule and placement is quite competitive, so if you are interested contact Erik Westerholm of the Northwest Energy Education Institute at Lane Community College or visit <http://www.oregonseia.org/ProfessionalTraining>.

LCC: Lane Community College operates the Northwest Energy Education Institute which offers a full two year Renewable Energy Technician associates degree geared toward individuals interested in the design and installation of renewable energy systems. Lane / NEEI can be reached at (541) 463-3977, or on the web at <http://www.nweei.org>.