

STEP
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Solar Site Considerations

Start with these general site considerations to gain a better understanding of how well your site is suited for solar. Many of these details will be reviewed by your contractor in Step 5.

Available space

- Do you want to install a solar electric system on your roof, on the ground or integrated onto a carport structure? PV arrays can be distributed throughout a community and could include a mix of roof- and ground-mounted arrays.
- Approximately how much available space do you have for the preferred installation location?
- What capacity solar electric system is needed for your building? (Step 3)
- How much space does that need? (Step 3) Note: For basic planning purposes, a good rule of thumb is 10-12 watts per square foot, or 100 sq. ft. per kilowatt (kW).

Azimuth & Tilt

- A roof or hill slope of ~30° is ideal, but solar is often installed on slopes ranging from 14°-40°. Solar can even be installed on a flat roof with a racking system providing the ideal tilt. The ideal tilt relates to your site's latitudinal location and seasonal energy consumption.

Shading Factors

- Are there surrounding trees or buildings that will cast shade on your proposed installation location? Shading at any time during daylight hours can affect the output of the solar electric system. Let your contractor know of any shading issues. There are specific system components more suitable for shaded sites.

Site Risks & Restrictions

- Do you have any community restrictions or preferences regarding the aesthetics of the installation?
- Are there surrounding factors that could expose your solar electric system to risk, such as a golf course or easy access for vandalism?
- If researching a roof-mounted system, how old is the roof? Solar panels can last for more than 25 years so it is worth knowing if the roof is structurally sound and won't need to be replaced in the near future.

Check out these online solar mapping resources

SCE territory – LA County Solar Map: solarmap.lacounty.gov

PG&E territory – PG&E Watt Plan: pge.wattplan.com

National resource – Google Sunroof: google.com/get/sunroof

National resource – NREL PV Watts: pvwatts.nrel.gov

