

Before Calling Solar Installers

Interested in generating your power with rooftop or ground-mounted solar panels? Don't want to call salespeople until you have an idea whether your home or business is a good candidate? While *every* situation is different, the following considerations will give you an *indication* as to whether solar power might make sense in *your* situation:

1. Do [deed restrictions or Preservation District or Historic District rules apply](#)? If so and if your project otherwise makes sense, consider requesting a variance.
2. Is your roof suitable? Most “flat” commercial roofs are ideal. (Membrane roofing is left undisturbed.) Residential roofs tend to be more complicated. Hip roofs’ triangular faces often have room for too few panels. Dormers, vents and skylights may be in the way. You may have a garage or carport roof or open ground where panels might better be installed.
3. Solar panels should face within 30° of due south. Nearby structures and trees shouldn't create too much shade. (You can trim or remove-and-replace *your* trees, but not likely your neighbor's trees.) Get an *approximate* idea of whether your roof receives enough solar insolation via these address-based web tools:^{1,2}
 - a. [Google Sunroof](#)—This site shows insolation on the main roof, not out-building roofs or open ground. It doesn't show roof geometry, dormers or penetrations, but does account for the sun's varying angles and hours of insolation over the course of a year.
 - b. [Google Earth](#)—This site helps you to see how trees and nearby structures impact insolation.
4. Confirm that your structure has enough electric service. (Metro Louisville requires residences to be wired for at least 200 amps of power supply.)
5. Sign up for one of Louisville CAN's B4UBuy—Going Solar workshops. See <https://www.louisvillecan.org/events> or request a new date [here](#).

¹ The Emerald Ash Borer is killing once plentiful Ash trees quickly. If you see excessive shade, check to see if any trees have since been removed.

² Don't rely on these sites too much. They require interpretation, because they can over- or under-interpret on-the-ground specifics.

15 June 2021