

Before Calling Solar Installers[©]

Interested in generating power with rooftop or ground-mounted solar panels? Don't want to call salespeople until you have reason to see your home or business is a good candidate for solar? 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. (Racks sit on membrane roofing and aren't disturbed.) Residential roofs tend to be more complicated. Hip roofs' triangular faces may have room for too few panels. Dormers, plumbing vents and/or skylights may be in the way. A garage or carport roof or open ground can be your best option.
3. Solar panels ideally face within 30° of due south. Nearby structures and trees shouldn't create 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 insolation¹ via these address-based web tools:^{2,3}
 - a. [Google Sunroof](#)—This site shows insolation only on the main roof, not out-building roofs or open ground. It doesn't see roof geometry, dormers or penetrations well, 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. Check how much electrical service your structure has. (Metro Louisville code may require your residence 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 “Insolation” is fancy word for sunshine.

² 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.

³ Don't use these websites for stand-alone decision-making. Because they can over- or under-interpret on-the-ground specifics, they often require experienced interpretation.

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