



California Residential Code Solar Voltaic System Access and Pathway Requirements One- and Two-Family Dwellings

R331.4 Access and pathways.

Roof access, pathways and spacing requirements shall be provided in accordance with Sections R331.4.1 through R331.4.2.4.

Exceptions:

1. Residential structures shall be designed so that each photovoltaic array is no greater than 150 feet by 150 feet in either axis.
2. Panels/modules shall be permitted to be located up to the roof ridge where an alternative ventilation method approved by the fire chief has been provided or where the fire chief has determined vertical ventilation techniques will not be employed.

R331.4.1 Roof access points.

Roof access points shall be located in areas that do not require the placement of ground ladders over openings such as windows or doors, and located at strong points of building construction in locations where the access point does not conflict with overhead obstructions such as tree limbs, wires or signs.

R331.4.2 Residential systems for one- and two-family dwellings.

Access to residential systems for one- and two family dwellings shall be provided in accordance with Sections R331.4.2.1 through R331.4.2.4.

R331.4.2.1 Residential buildings with hip roof layouts.

Panels/modules installed on residential buildings with hip roof layouts shall be located in a manner that provides a 3-foot-wide (914 mm) clear access pathway from the eave to the ridge on each roof slope where panels/modules are located. The access pathway shall be located at a structurally strong location on the building capable of supporting the live load of fire fighters accessing the roof:

Exception: These requirements shall not apply to roofs with slopes of two units vertical in 12 units horizontal (2: 12) or less.

R331.4.2.2 Residential buildings with a single ridge.

Panels/modules installed on residential buildings with a single ridge shall be located in a manner that provides two, 3-foot-wide access pathways from the eave to the ridge on each roof slope where panels/modules are located.

Exception: This requirement shall not apply to roofs with slopes of two units vertical in 12 units horizontal (2:12) or less.

R331.4.2.3 Residential buildings with roof hips and valleys.

Panels/modules installed on residential buildings with roof hips and valleys shall be located no closer than 18 inches to a hip or a valley where panels/modules are to be placed on both sides of a hip or valley. Where panels are to be located on only one side of a hip or valley that is of equal length, the panels shall be permitted to be placed directly adjacent to the hip or valley. Exception: These requirements shall not apply to roofs with slopes of two units vertical in 12 units horizontal (2:12) or less.

R331.4.2.4 Residential building smoke ventilation.

Panels/modules installed on residential buildings shall be located no higher than 3 feet below the ridge in order to allow for fire department smoke ventilation operations.