

Solar Contractor Licensing

Florida



The Florida Legislature and the Construction Industry Licensing Board (CILB) have established the scope of work for solar contractors. There are two solar contractor categories: Certified Solar Contractor (CV) and Residential Solar Water Heating Specialty Contractor (CW).

The CV license scope of work covers residential and commercial solar water heating, solar pool heating and photovoltaic (solar electric, or PV) systems. The CV license holder is exempt from subcontracting certain roofing, plumbing and electrical work on residential installations. Electrical contractors (EC) are also authorized to install PV systems, but may be required to subcontract roofing work if the local building department so requires.

The CW license scope of work is limited to solar water heating and solar pool heating systems on residences only. The CW license holder is not authorized to install PV systems and is not authorized to install solar water heating or pool heating systems on commercial buildings. Since the CW license does not have these tasks included in its scope of work, a CW license holder may not subcontract the work to an authorized license holder (such as an electrical contractor or CV solar contractor). Plumbing contractors (CF) are also authorized to install solar water heaters and pool heaters, but may be required to subcontract roofing and electrical work if the local building department so requires. Plumbing contractors are not authorized to install PV systems.

If a CW license holder serves as the prime contractor on a job outside of its scope of work, it will likely be considered to be engaging in unlicensed activity. A subcontractor who performs work for a CW license holder that is outside the scope of the CW license will likely be considered as aiding and abetting an unlicensed contractor.

The Florida Legislature established a solar rebate program for residential and commercial solar water heaters and PV systems, and residential solar pool heaters. The legislature determined that a solar water or pool heater must be installed by a solar contractor or plumbing contractor; and a PV system must be installed by a solar contractor or an electrical contractor. As a practical matter, this means that a residential solar water heater may be installed by a CW, CV or CF license holder; a commercial solar hot water heater may be installed by a CV or CF, but not a CW license holder. A residential or commercial PV system may be installed by a CV or EC, but not a CW or CF license holder. Systems installed by unauthorized contractors will not be eligible for rebates.

Several local licensing jurisdictions have established a solar contractor certificate of competency that is usually designated as an RX license. These are limited to the installation of solar water or pool heaters only within the jurisdiction that has granted the license, and generally will not be authorized to install PV systems. These license holders are permitted to install residential solar water and pool heating systems under the state solar rebate program.

As a result of confusion at many levels, FlaSEIA will request a series of Declaratory Statements from the Department of Business and Professional Regulation on the authority of contractors to engage in solar activity.