



# Photovoltaic panels as roof design requirements

Does a roof support solar photovoltaic panels or modules?

The structure of a roof that supports solar photovoltaic panels or modules shall be designed to accommodate the full solar photovoltaic panels or modules and ballast dead load, including concentrated loads from support frames in combination with the loads from Section CS507.1.1.1 (IBC 1607.13.5.1) and other applicable loads.

What are solar photovoltaic design guidelines?

In addition to the IRC and IBC, the Structural Engineers Association of California (SEAOC) has published solar photovoltaic (PV) design guidelines, which provide specific recommendations for solar array installations on low-slope roofs<sup>3</sup>.

What conditions should a roof support a photovoltaic panel system?

Roof structures that support photovoltaic panel systems shall be designed to resist each of the following conditions: 1. Applicable uniform and concentrated roof loads with the photovoltaic panel system dead loads.

Are solar panels required for a roof photovoltaic live load?

Solar photovoltaic panels or modules that are independent structures and do not have accessible/occupied space underneath are not required to accommodate a roof photovoltaic live load, provided the area under the structure is restricted to keep the public away.

What is a roof photovoltaic live load?

The roof photovoltaic live load in areas covered by solar photovoltaic panels or modules shall be in addition to the panel loading unless the area covered by each solar photovoltaic panel or module is inaccessible. Areas where the clear space between the panels and the rooftop is not more than 24 inches (610 mm) shall be considered inaccessible.

Can PV panels be installed on a new roof?

For example, some jurisdictions in CA and CO now require PV panels to be installed on certain new roof structures. The primary code used by structural engineers in the determination of applicable loads on buildings is ASCE 7: Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures which is adopted by reference in the IRC and IBC.



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