

# County of Marin Green Building Reach Code Frequently Asked Questions

## WHAT GREEN BUILDING REQUIREMENTS APPLY TO ME?

Green Building Guide	Applicable Projects	Tiers
Single Family New	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Single-Family or Two-Family Residential</li> <li>• Single-Family or Two-Family Residential, demolition<sup>1</sup> and rebuild</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy Efficiency Standards are based on home square footage (4,000 sq ft threshold).</li> </ul>
Single Family Remodel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single family or two-family residential additions and remodels. Tier to be determined by the total remodeled and added square footage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Building Standards are based on remodel and addition square footage (750 sq ft threshold).</li> </ul>
Multifamily New	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New multifamily developments (greater than two units)</li> <li>• Multifamily demolition<sup>1</sup> and rebuild</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy Efficiency Standards are based on the number of stories in the project (3 story threshold)</li> </ul>
Multifamily Remodel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multifamily residential additions and remodels. Tier to be determined by the total remodeled and added square footage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Building Standards are based on remodel and addition square footage (750 sq ft threshold).</li> </ul>
Nonresidential New	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New nonresidential construction</li> <li>• Nonresidential demolition<sup>1</sup> and rebuild</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No tiers for new commercial projects</li> </ul>
Nonresidential Remodel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonresidential additions and remodels. Tier to be determined by the total remodeled and added square footage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Building Standards are based on remodel and addition square footage (3,000 sq ft threshold).</li> </ul>

## WHY ARE MARIN'S STANDARDS DIFFERENT THAN THE STATE'S?

Since 2007, Marin County has adopted energy efficiency and green building codes that go beyond State standards to cultivate a high-performance built environment that improves community wellbeing, saves occupants money, and promotes the wise use of resources.

## WHAT IF I AM DEVELOPING A MIXED USE PROJECT THAT HAS BOTH COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL USES?

A mixed use project must submit separate checklists for both project types. For example, an apartment over retail would be required to achieve residential green building requirements for that project size, and the commercial portion would need to comply with the nonresidential standards.

## WHAT IS A FIELD VERIFIER, AND HOW DO I FIND ONE?

A Field Verifier is a building professional with accreditation through a professional organization, who can confirm that selected green building and energy efficiency measures have been implemented. Field verifiers can be found through the directory at [maringreenbuilding.org](http://maringreenbuilding.org), or through the links below.

[CALGREEN  
INSPECTOR](#)

[GREEN POINT  
RATER](#)

[LEED AP](#)

[HERS RATER](#)

[PASSIVE HOUSE  
RATER](#)

## GREEN POINT RATED SAYS I ONLY HAVE TO EXCEED TITLE 24 ENERGY STANDARDS BY 10%, BUT THE GREEN BUILDING GUIDE SAYS I MUST ACHIEVE AT LEAST 15%? WHICH DO I COMPLY WITH?

You must comply with the County's adopted energy efficiency standards, as outlined in the Green Building Guides. The energy savings achieved can then be applied to the green building checklist (CALGreen, Green Point Rated, LEED) for points towards total green building checklist points required.

## HOW DO I KNOW WHAT SIZE MY PROJECT IS FOR THE GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS? DOES IT INCLUDE MY NEW GARAGE?

The green building requirements apply only to conditioned space. Any unconditioned space, like garages, barns, or sheds are not included. You can determine the total square footage on your Construction Permit Application, by adding the Subtotal of the Remodeled Dwelling Area to the Subtotal of the Addition/New Dwelling Area.

## IF I CHOOSE TO USE GREEN POINT RATED OR LEED FOR MY PROJECT, DO I NEED TO HAVE THE PROJECT CERTIFIED THROUGH THOSE ORGANIZATIONS?

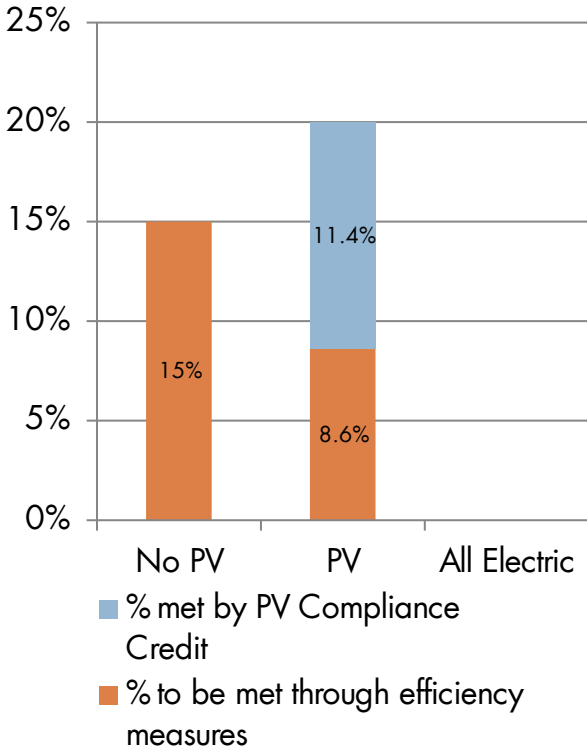
No. These verification systems are used to outline best practices, but achieving certification through the organization is not required, although applicants are welcome to pursue this for other reasons, such as increased property values.

## WHY IS THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY REQUIREMENT HIGHER IF I'M INSTALLING SOLAR ON MY RESIDENTIAL PROJECT?

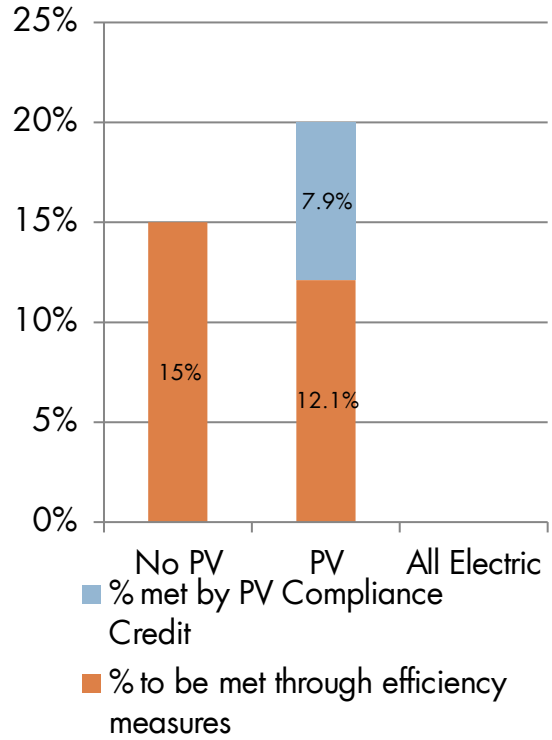
For single family homes and low-rise multifamily (<3 stories) projects, the state of California's energy modeling tools allows for something called the "Photovoltaic (PV) Compliance Credit"

The PV Compliance Credit allows you to count some of your solar production towards your energy efficiency target, effectively reducing the number for energy efficiency measures an applicant must install to meet their savings target. This concept is illustrated in the graph below.

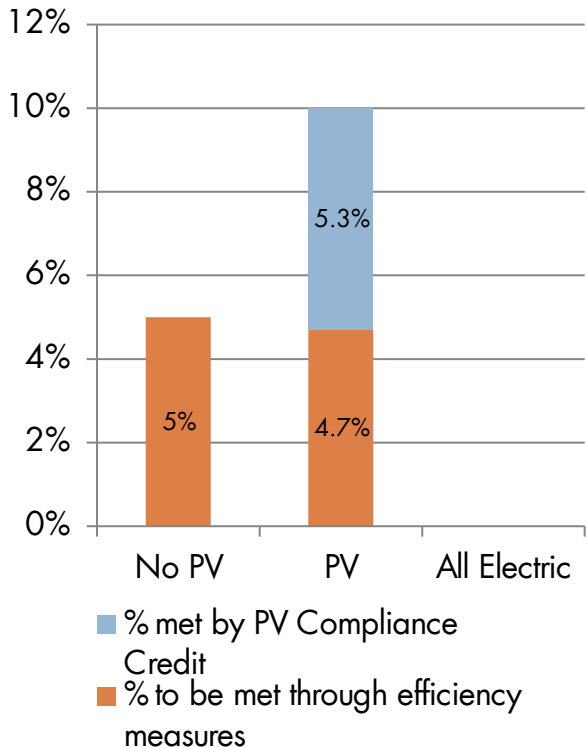
CZ 2, Single Family Home



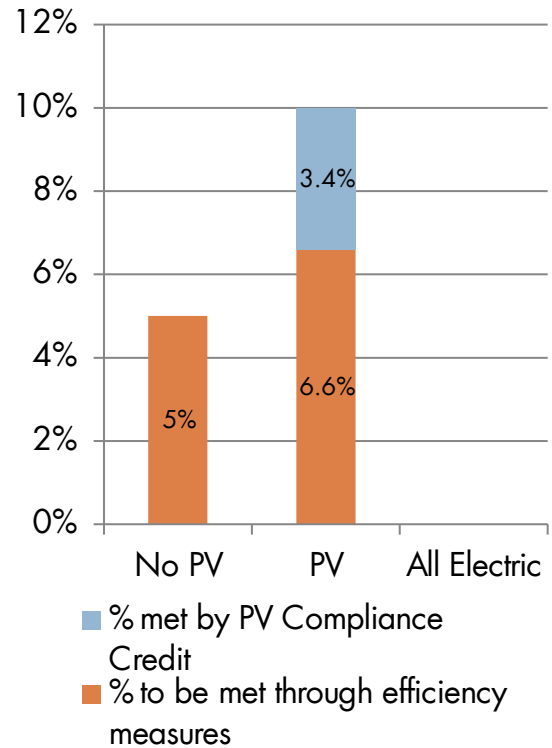
CZ 3, Single Family Home



CZ 2, Multi-Family



CZ 3, Multi-Family



The maximum allowable PV compliance credit is established by the state by climate zone. To find your climate zone, search for your zip code here: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/maps/renewable/BuildingClimateZonesByZIPCode.pdf>

The goal of providing multiple compliance measures for energy efficiency is to recognize the cost and benefit of installing solar while also recognizing that installing onsite renewables is not feasible for every project site.

#### WHY ARE THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS LOWER FOR ALL-ELECTRIC HOMES?

The County's Climate Action Plan establishes community-wide targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), a leading cause of climate change. As Marin's electricity supply becomes increasingly renewable, natural gas, which has no commercially scalable renewable alternative, is accountable for more of the greenhouse gas emissions in the built environment. Additionally, because of barriers at a statewide level, complying with the energy code is more difficult with all-electric new homes. The reduced energy efficiency requirements recognize this and try to account for this in the green building options.