



Bennett-Watkins Fire Rescue

District Office: 303-644-3572 Fax: 303-644-3401

355 4th Street, Bennett, CO 80102

Email: LifeSafety@BennettFireRescue.org

"Striving to Preserve Life and Property"

Bennett-Watkins Fire Rescue – Solar Development Requirements

Overview:

This document pertains to the Fire District requirements for all ground mounted solar arrays installed within the Bennett-Watkins Fire Rescue (BWFR) jurisdiction. These requirements are applied District wide and are based on a number of factors including fire code requirements, wildland firefighting considerations, and other governmental agency input.

Requirements:

1. **Facility Signage / Address** – All solar facilities shall be issued a physical address by the County or Town. The facility address must be posted on a permanent sign at the entrance of the facility along the main access road. The address shall comply with the requirements outlined in IFC 505.1. Address numbers shall be Arabic numbers or alphabetical letters. Numbers shall be a minimum of 4 inches (101.6 mm) high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch (12.7 mm).
2. **Roadway / Fire Apparatus Access** – All roads that serve a ground mounted solar array site must meet the Fire District minimum standards for fire apparatus access roads. These standards are outlined in the adopted International Fire Code in both Chapter 5 and Appendix D. All roads must be a minimum of 6 inches of class 6 road base, or better, measured at 80 percent compaction. Additionally, no road shall be less than 20 feet wide. All roads in excess of 150' in length shall be provided with an approved turn around meeting the specifications demonstrated in IFC Appendix D.
3. **KNOX Fire Department Access Hardware** – All facility gates and other access points shall be equipped with approved KNOX brand fire department access hardware. All proposed or required hardware shall be approved by BWFR prior to installation. Individual locations for required access hardware will be identified by BWFR during the facility plan review process.
4. **Vegetation Management Plans** – All solar facilities shall be required to submit and receive approval of a facility vegetation management plan. This plan shall outline the operator's planned activities to keep vegetation inside the facility perimeter maintained to a minimum level. This may include treatment, mowing, and/or other methods of fuel reduction. This plan shall also clearly indicate and require the operator to meet all requirements of the International Fire Code throughout the life of the facility. Failure to adhere to the approved vegetation management plan may result in the issuance of fire code violations or a code summons.
5. **Facility Fire Break Perimeter** – The adoption of the International Fire Code was amended in 2019 to include the following changes to section 1204.4:

"1204.4 Ground-mounted photovoltaic panel systems. Ground-mounted photovoltaic panel systems shall comply with Section 1204.1 and this section. Setback requirements shall not apply to ground-mounted, free-standing photovoltaic arrays. A clear, brush-free area of 10 feet (3048 mm) shall be required and maintained around the array equipment for ground-mounted photovoltaic arrays. A fire break or other facility perimeter design acceptable to the fire code official shall be required to reduce or

eliminate the interface risk from wildfire.”

BWFR recognizes a 20-30-foot fire break perimeter design that is maintained vegetation free as an effective means of reducing or eliminating wildfire interface risk that is associated with ground mounted solar arrays. This design requirement is applied to all solar projects within BWFR’s jurisdiction. This design is based on a common sense approach and integration of other nationally recognized wildfire defensible space designs that reduce fuels within ignition zones around buildings or facilities.

6. **Submittal for Plan Review** – All solar sites need to be submitted to the District for plan review. The plan review process will consist of evaluating the project for adherence to the design requirements outlined above. Plan review comments and a permit will be issued for each solar site project.
7. **Out of District Locations** – All locations for ground mounted solar arrays that reside in locations outside the Fire District’s legal jurisdiction boundaries will require a site specific Out of District Service Contract. BWFR will not provide “will serve” letters or other guarantees of service for sites located outside of the District without a service contract. If your proposed site needs an Out of District Service Contract, please contact the District Administrative Office at 303-644-3572.

Questions and Additional Information:

All solar facility questions shall be directed to the District Life Safety Division at 303-644-3572 or LifeSafety@BennettFireRescue.org