



## Roof Access Requirements for Photovoltaic Solar Installations

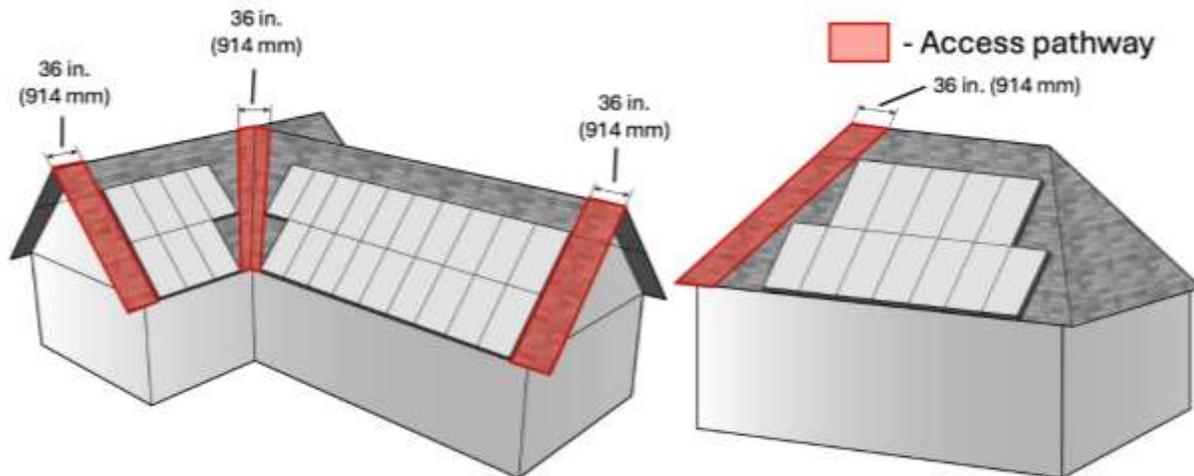
The [NFPA 1, Fire Code](#), regulates the installation of photovoltaic (PV) or solar installations for one- and two-family dwelling and townhouse roofs. Access pathways are required on roofs to facilitate fire service access as well as egress and fire service ventilation during a structure fire.

When installing photovoltaic panels on one- and two-family homes, it's important to understand the requirements for access pathways and the requirements for setback from the ridge, which only apply to roofs with a slope greater than a 2-in-12 pitch.

### Access Pathways

Access pathways are intended to provide access to and egress from a roof in an emergency, therefore it is important that they are located in such a way that there are minimal obstructions (vent pipes, conduit, etc.) within the pathway. They are required to be not less than 36 in. (914 mm) wide and run from the gutter to the ridge.

The Town of Bar Harbor requires one access pathway from gutter to ridge on the street or driveway side of the dwelling. The pathway must be on the same roof plane as the panels, on an adjacent roof plane, or straddling the same and adjacent roof plane. The figures below, from Annex A of NFPA 1, show access pathway options for two types of peaked roofs, which are common to one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses.



### Setback from Ridge

Solar panels (photovoltaic arrays) must also be set back from the ridge line to allow for fire service roof ventilation at the peak of the roof. The panels must be set back from the ridge at least 18 in. (457 mm).