**Model Solar Ordinance  
City Guidance Document**

**Standards**

*Height.* It is common for cities to limit the height of roof-mounted solar energy systems to 1- 5 feet. Alternatively, some cities limit the height of the systems to the allowable building height in the applicable zoning district. Ground-mounted solar energy systems are frequently limited to 15 or 20 feet in height.

*Setbacks.* Cities generally require setbacks of 3-15 feet from property lines and 3-30 feet from structures. Alternatively, some cities cite the setback requirements for the applicable zoning district. Some cities may wish to set different setbacks from property lines of the front, side, and back of the property as well as from public right-of-way and/or utility easements.

*Coverage.* Cities tend to limit the coverage of roof-mounted systems to 80% of the roof’s surface. The clearance required from edges to the roof tend to range from 1-3 feet. One of the main reasons for having a setback is to allow firefighters to access the roof.

\*In addition, some cities may choose to adopt different standards for different zoning districts (commercial, industrial, and residential). If this is the case, the language from the model solar ordinance could be tailored to the desired requirements for the specific zoning district, with a separate “standards” section for each zoning district.