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Attributes and competencies required for EECA accredited solar installers

A technical guide to support for the accreditation of suitable solar system installers.

Background and purpose

EECA's mission is to mobilise New Zealanders to be world leaders in clean and clever energy use, and as part of this EECA has a strategic focus to [accelerate renewable energy](#).

Increasing the uptake of solar will rely on consumers having confidence they are purchasing good solar products that will be installed to a high level of workmanship, and that they will have a positive buying experience through sound advice and good customer support.

EECA recognises the benefits that occur when the industry itself sets up systems that provides customers the assurance they seek, such as through an installer accreditation scheme. EECA, as an independent Crown Agency, is prepared to endorse suitable accreditation programmes to signal to customers that they can rely on its accredited installers.

This document specifically focuses on requirements for EECA approving and endorsing suitable programmes that accredit installers of solar PV systems and batteries.

[EECA's research has shown](#) that when considering buying solar energy systems customers frequently report being overwhelmed by conflicting or overly technical information.

Trust in sources is a major concern, not just in the messenger but whether information is current. A government-endorsed accreditation programme helps build trust.

For solar energy systems to work optimally it is essential that solar installers are experienced at being able to select suitable systems to fit the customer's circumstances and needs, as well as undertaking a safe and high-quality installation.

Following a period of public consultation and direct engagement with key stakeholders, EECA have finalised a list of key attributes and requirements for installers to be assessed and approved, in order to support the uptake of efficient and effective solar generation.

The key objectives of these requirements are to:

- Enhance the safety, efficiency and reliability of photovoltaic (PV) installations.
- Promote industry best practices in the design, installation, and integration of solar PV systems.
- Establish and maintain a qualified network of skilled designers and installers.
- Support wider adoption of renewable energy by increasing owner confidence in the quality and performance of solar PV solutions.

Approach and application

To provide a level of assurance to those people seeking to have a solar PV system installed, EECA has worked with key stakeholders to produce a list of suitable criteria for a good solar installer. We now propose that EECA will endorse programmes that meet these criteria.

An accreditation programme must cover three key areas:

- **Business/operational attributes and competence criteria** outline the key requirements for an installer.
- **Design and quote criteria** focuses on the robustness and clarity needed for design and quoting for local conditions.
- **Installation criteria** lay out the reasonable expectations for installation and aftersales support.

Should a solar installer be able to demonstrate their ability to meet these criteria, they elevate themselves above others. In a rapidly developing market, with green loan providers and Government-led programmes looking for assurance with installer quality, an accreditation will hold credibility with any customer looking to install solar.

EECA is inviting applications from any industry accreditation programme provider and will endorse those that meet the minimum requirements. However, EECA also reserves the right to administer a programme directly if there are insufficient providers available and operating in the market to meet our intended outcomes.

For continuing endorsement, programme providers must be open to third-party audits of installations, and installers, to satisfy EECA that the criteria are being met.

Delivery and administration

Initial application

Potential accreditation programme providers will need to submit an application, along with supporting evidence, to demonstrate that they satisfy each of the applicable criteria for assessment by EECA.

If satisfied, EECA will endorse the programme.

Ongoing endorsement of programme

Any accreditation programme that wishes to remain endorsed by EECA must make available their programme criteria, records, and contact details for individual solar installers for audit purposes. EECA will seek a third-party auditor to periodically assess programme providers, covering the following key aspects:

- receiving applications from potential installers wishing to become accredited under the programme,
- assessing if the applicant meets the programme's performance criteria, and if they have provided sufficient support evidence that they satisfy these criteria,
- undertaking targeted quality assurance checks at periodic intervals to ensure that installers are still meeting the performance criteria,
- advising EECA if any installers are not satisfying the programmes requirements, and
- providing timely updates to EECA when installers are added to, or removed from, the accreditation programme,
- having sufficient process in place for both onboarding and offboarding installers who have either been shown to meet the criteria or have been removed for failing to meet the programme's requirements beyond reasonable limitations.
- setting fees for installers that are reasonable and justifiable

There is also an expectation for periodic auditing of installers to be undertaken by programme providers. These costs are expected to borne by the programme provider themself, whereas costs borne from EECA initiated auditing will be attributed to EECA.

Legal requirements

This document does not replace requirements for solar systems to meet any and all legal requirements, and these must be supplied and installed in accordance with all relevant components of the [Building Act 2004](#), [Building Regulations 1992 \(The Building code\)](#), [Electricity \(Safety\) Regulations 2010](#), [Electricity Act 1992](#), [Wiring Rules](#), [Electricity Industry Participation Code 2010](#), and any other legislative requirements at the time that it was installed.

Revisions to criteria

The criteria may evolve over time as technology and standards develop. Any revision to this, or related specifications, will have a suitable consultation, notification and transition period.

Minimum criteria for accreditation

There are three key attributes that solar PV installers must be able to demonstrate:

- **Business/operational attributes and competence criteria** - outlines the key requirements for an installer.
- **Design and quote criteria** - focuses on the robustness and clarity needed for design and quoting for local conditions.
- **Installation criteria** - lays out the reasonable expectations for installations and aftersales support.

Any solar accreditation provider looking to be endorsed by EECA must prove that their programme meets all of the minimum requirements as laid out below.

Core attributes and competence criteria for installers

- The company directors are demonstrably fit and proper people (e.g. no criminal record, not bankrupt with the last five years, and/or failed a MoJ check.) In the case of a charitable trust or non-profit, the board of directors would be subject to the same checks.
- The applicant is a New Zealand registered business with a NZBN (or for a non-profit or trust, a New Zealand registered charity.)
- Evidence of sufficient experience installing solar systems, for example documented evidence of previous installs and references from previous clients. Companies that cannot provide sufficient track record may receive a provisional rating or be accepted into a pathway to accreditation.
- The installer has signed up to the “Code of conduct” requirements as set out by the accreditation provider (see Appendix 1).
- All electrical work is supervised and approved by a registered electrician with a current practicing licence and inspected by an independent inspector, as required.
- Has proof of sufficient current public liability insurance for the works, to the value of no less than \$2,000,000.
- Has Health and Safety training and processes in place for assessing and mitigating risks to an acceptable level. This will include as a minimum a health and safety policy that covers all aspects of solar installations and business practices, documented job safety analyses/safety plans, training registers, safety and plant equipment registers.

- Evidence that all staff (including sub-contractors) who are working at heights must be adequately trained and supervised.
- The installer has a continual professional development programme in place to ensure that all key staff maintain the necessary relevant skills and qualifications.
- Proof of competence and knowledge of required specific standards and the Building Code (see Appendix 2).
- Marketing activity is evidence-based and does not make unreasonable claims regarding expected system performance and savings.

Design and quote criteria

- Provide a site-specific full system design including any shading issues, orientation and tilt of the roof(s), along with the system's site-specific energy yield, including expected energy yield (kWh per month) across a typical year, the customers daily load profile during the hours of solar generation, the operation of the battery to store and offset load (if present).
- Ensure all solar hardware components meet required technical specifications. These may be set by the accreditation provider in terms of product demand flexibility or interoperability.
- Ensure the array design is optimised for the available roof space, or ensure there is sufficient space for ground-mounted systems.
- Ensure array configuration and batteries are compatible with the inverter specification.
- Ensure all equipment is fit for purpose and correctly rated.
- Warranty information on all equipment is presented on quote.
- Ensure compatibility of system with local Electricity Distribution Business (EDB) and obtain confirmation of export limits.
- Pricing on quote is transparent and itemised and provides full specifications of the system including quantity, make and model number of the solar modules and inverter/s.
- Claims of system performance and ROI are reasonable and well-referenced to enable comparison.
- Consideration given to roof condition before recommending installation and noted on quote. Existing roof may require maintenance or replacement before proceeding.
- Response times to customer enquiries and requests are met within reasonable timeframes (timeframes set by the accreditation provider).
- The system has been designed, and installation is overseen by a qualified technical lead.

Installation criteria

- Hardware installed must match the quoted items, unless this has first been modelled in design and pre-approved by the customer.
- The system must be installed in accordance with both the Building Code and the manufacturer's specifications.
- The installation must not impact the weathertightness of the roof.
- The installation must not allow access for vermin or birds to the roof-space.
- The installation must allow adequate access/space for roof cleaning and maintenance.
- The system has been commissioned and is fully operational before the installer leaves site or invoices for the final works, or any next steps are clearly communicated.
- The customer has been walked through system usage and maintenance requirements post-commissioning. The customer must have been provided with a handover pack with a suggested maintenance plan, aftersales support guarantee, warranty information, troubleshooting contact information and guidance for raising complaints with the accreditation provider.
- All rubbish must be removed from site before works are completed.

Note: Validation of installation criteria is expected to be assessed by the accreditation provider via both site auditing and desktop verification of installation photographs and commissioning/handover documents.

Additional requirements for programme providers

Complaints processes

The accreditation provider must have a defined complaints process for escalating customer complaints which may arise from installations and provide details of the process to EECA.

Non-compliance and grounds for removal

The accreditation provider must have a defined process for dealing with non-compliance that includes timelines for dealing with corrective actions as raised by the provider to installers and outlines installer suspension or removal for repeated or serious breaches of their criteria (see Appendix 3).

Further considerations

Any solar accreditation provider would need to have their developed criteria assessed by EECA to satisfy that it meets the minimum requirements laid out in this guidance document.

Periodic assessments by independent auditors will be required to maintain ongoing approval by EECA.

Audits

As part of this programme, there's also an expectation that the programme providers shall periodically audit installers for compliance.

Accrediting bodies should provide clear messaging to installers about keeping relevant records of designs and their inputs, photographic evidence of installations and any handover notes and documentation for auditing purposes.

Installers must make themselves available to attend site with the auditors and be able to answer any reasonable questions that the auditor may have about the installation.

Following this, the auditors will issue an assessment report based on their findings.

If the report includes any corrective actions, installers must undertake to rectify these action points at their own expense within the specified timeframe. Failure to do so may result in the installer being removed from the programme.

As part of the overall programme, EECA may choose to employ independent auditors to physically assess the quality of a number of solar installations after they have been completed, and check compliance against the criteria.

Appendix 3 gives an example of the types of audits that are needed, however EECA will work with programme providers to refine the scope and process.

Appendix 1 – Code of conduct example requirements

EECA expects a provider code of conduct to cover the following types of content. This can be organised in a way that suits the provider, and agreed with EECA:

Clear scope and accountability: state who the code applies to, including accredited installers, designers, sales staff, subcontractors, agents and any business trading on the accreditation. The accredited business should remain accountable for work and representations made on its behalf.

Consumer-first commitments: require installers to act honestly, fairly, transparently and with due care and skill across the full customer journey: marketing, sales, site assessment, quote, contract, installation, commissioning, handover, warranty, after-sales support and complaints.

Compliance with law, standards and licences: require compliance with all relevant consumer law, electrical safety law, building requirements, network connection requirements, manufacturer specifications and applicable installation standards.

Use of competent people only: require installers to only perform work within the scope of their accreditation, and not misrepresent the scope of their accreditation, qualifications or licences.

Insurance and liability: require appropriate public liability and other relevant insurances to protect the customer and their premises and require installers to repair or compensate for damage caused during work.

Honest advertising and promotion: prohibit false, misleading or exaggerated claims about price, rebates, government association, country of origin, quality, capacity, output, savings, payback, warranty, accreditation status or installer experience.

Return-on-investment and savings-claim rules: require any ROI, payback or bill-savings claim to include the assumptions used, including system design, expected output, incentives, energy prices, usage profile, export assumptions, finance costs, maintenance costs and end-of-life costs. Require the installer to state that the calculation is an estimate unless a guarantee is expressly provided.

Responsible sales conduct: prohibit high-pressure sales tactics, misleading “limited time” offers, false bulk-buy/community discount claims, unwarranted sales terms or deposits, repeated unwanted contact, pressure to sign immediately, and inducements that distort informed choice.

Protection for vulnerable consumers: require installers to take additional care where customers may be vulnerable due to age, disability, illness, language barriers, financial stress, limited technical knowledge, or reliance on electricity for medical or life-support equipment.

Fit-for-purpose assessment: require an installer to ask about the customer's circumstances, objectives, electricity use, site constraints, roof condition, shading, switchboard capacity, network/export constraints, battery backup expectations, EV charging plans and any critical electricity needs before recommending a system.

Site-specific design and quote requirements: require a written quote that includes system size, components, models, quantities, configuration, expected performance, limitations, installation timeframe, total price, itemised costs, warranties, maintenance obligations, customer responsibilities, approvals required, connection/metering requirements, export limits, and any excluded or potentially extra work.

Ethical handling of customer deposits: requires installers to handle customer deposits in a way that protects customers from installer insolvency, misuse of funds, project abandonment, or unreasonable delay.

Contract standards: require written contracts to match the quote, identify any differences from the quote, include warranty and consumer guarantee information, state cancellation rights, set out reasonable termination fees only, and require written customer acceptance of material changes to design, equipment, price or installation timeframe.

Network approval and activation obligations: require clarity on who is responsible for network approval, export approval, metering changes, inspection and certification. Where the installer undertakes this role, they should submit documentation within reasonable timeframes, keep the customer informed, and explain any restrictions or delays.

Installation quality and safety: require installation within the promised timeframe, by trained and competent personnel, in accordance with safety regulations, manufacturer specifications, relevant standards, network requirements and good industry practice.

Site care: require installers to exercise due care at the customer's premises, maintain safe work practices, leave the site safe and tidy, and provide restitution for damage caused by their actions.

Commissioning and handover: require installers to provide safe-use information, shutdown procedures, monitoring instructions, maintenance requirements, warranty documents, compliance certificates, as-built design information, manuals, emergency contacts and any customer obligations needed to keep the system operating effectively.

Performance and defect obligations: require the installed system to meet the agreed design, specifications and reasonable performance expectations, subject to disclosed assumptions and limitations. If the installer becomes aware of a defect or unsafe product/system, the code should require prompt notification and remediation.

Warranty and after-sales service: require prompt response to warranty claims, reasonable timeframes for repairs or replacements, clear responsibility for workmanship versus product warranties, and supplier/manufacture contact details if the installer is unavailable.

Complaints process: require each accredited installer to have a fair, timely and transparent complaints process, including how complaints can be made, acknowledgement timeframes, investigation steps, a complaints register, target response times, and written final outcomes.

Escalation to the accreditation programme: require unresolved complaints to be escalatable to the accreditation provider/programme itself, not only to the installer.

Monitoring, audits and enforcement: require the accreditation provider to audit compliance, investigate complaints, require remedial action, and impose sanctions such as warnings, suspension, cancellation or removal from the programme for serious, repeated or wilful breaches.

Record-keeping: require installers to keep accurate and accessible records supporting the work performed, including site assessment, design, quote, contract, consent/approval evidence, installation records, commissioning documents, customer communications and complaint records.

Conflicts of interest: require installers and accredited businesses to avoid actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest, disclose them promptly in writing to the accreditation provider, and resolve them before proceeding where they could affect impartiality or consumer outcomes.

Privacy and data handling: require confidentiality of customer information, compliance with privacy law, secure handling of monitoring or consumption data, and written customer consent before sharing information except where disclosure is legally required.

Transparent use of accreditation marks: require compliance with clear rules for using any accreditation logos or programme branding, including prohibitions on implying government / EECA guarantee or association, product approval, subsidy eligibility or accreditation beyond the actual scope.

Appendix 2 – List of relevant standards for installers to adhere to and display competence in

- AS/NZS 5033 - installation of PV arrays
- AS/NZS 5139 - battery system safety
- AS/NZS 4777 - inverter grid connection
- AS/NZS 3000 - wiring rules
- AS/NZS 1170.2 - wind actions
- AS/NZS 1891 series - industrial fall arrest
- AS/NZS 4994.1:2023 - edge protection
- AS/NZS 1892.1 - portable ladders
- WorkSafe NZ - Best Practice Guidelines for Working at Height
- PAS 6014:2025 - residential solar PV and battery storage
- [EECA Approved-solar-products-technical-specification-V-1.2.pdf](#)

Appendix 3 – Additional detail on audit and corrective actions

Specific audit and corrective plans by providers may vary, but there are four types of audits that accreditation providers should be prepared to implement.

1. Entry audit before an installer can join the scheme

Each installer business should pass a documented entry audit covering the minimum criteria.

2. Early-stage audit for new accredited installers

For a newly accredited installer, the provider should audit the first completed jobs before the installer is treated as fully established.

Minimum requirement:

- desktop review of the first three completed installations, including quote, contract, design, photos, compliance certificate, handover pack and customer communication
- at least one physical site inspection within the first six months or first 10 installations, whichever comes first
- higher sampling for battery installations, complex sites, new subcontractors or installers with limited trading history.

3. Routine surveillance audits

Each accredited installer should be subject to ongoing surveillance.

Minimum requirement:

- annual desktop audit of business systems, complaints, insurance, staff competence, CPD, sample quotes and marketing claims
- random file reviews of completed installations throughout the year
- site inspections of a risk-weighted sample of completed installations
- advertising and ROI-claim reviews at least annually, and preferably quarterly for high-volume installers.

Minimum site-audit sampling:

At least 1 completed installation per year or 2–5% of installations, whichever is higher
new battery installers: at least one battery installation inspected within the first six months.

4. Triggered audits

A triggered audit should occur where any of the following arise:

- safety incident, fire, electric shock, roof damage, water ingress or battery fault
- customer complaint involving quality, safety, misleading claims, warranty refusal or poor after-sales support
- failed inspection by a regulator, network, insurer or scheme auditor
- suspected unlicensed work or inadequate supervision
- repeated design errors or documentation defects
- unexplained high cancellation rates or complaints
- unusually aggressive ROI, payback or “free solar” advertising
- rapid growth in installation volume
- use of new subcontractors or offshore sales channels
- failure to respond to scheme information requests.

Audit fieldwork

The audit should include some or all of:

- review of quote, design, contract and handover documents
- review of design assumptions, shading, roof suitability and export constraints
- comparison between quoted system and installed system
- inspection of workmanship, labelling, isolators, inverter, battery, roof penetrations and weathertightness
- review of commissioning records and customer handover
- review of complaints and warranty response times
- customer interview or survey
- advertising and sales-practice review.

Corrective-action requirements

Where a breach of the criteria has been found, a corrective action notice should be issued. A corrective-action notice should require:

- the specific issue to be corrected
- the affected customer or installation
- immediate containment actions
- rectification steps
- responsible person
- completion deadline
- required acceptable proof
- customer communication requirements
- whether previous jobs must be reviewed for the same issue.

Acceptable proof should include:

- clear date-stamped photos, including close-up and wide-context photos
- revised quote, contract, design or handover documentation
- electrical certificate or compliance documentation
- customer confirmation where appropriate
- evidence of refund, repair, replacement or warranty remedy
- staff training record
- updated internal process or template
- independent re-inspection report for major or critical issues.

Probation

Probation should be used where the installer can remain in the scheme but needs closer supervision.

Grounds for probation:

- repeated minor or moderate breaches
- one major breach that has been rectified
- reinstatement after suspension
- new evidence of weak internal QA
- complaints trend indicating poor after-sales support.

Probation conditions may include:

- increased audit sampling
- pre-approval of marketing claims
- review of the next three quotes before contract signing
- mandatory training or CPD
- independent review of the next three installations
- monthly reporting of complaints and corrective actions.

Suggested probation period:

- standard: 3 months
- serious or repeated issues: 6 months
- reinstatement after suspension: 6–12 months.

Suspension process

Suspension should mean the installer cannot market itself as actively accredited, accept new work under the scheme, or use programme branding while suspended. The installer should still be required to complete urgent safety rectification and honour warranties, subject to oversight.

Grounds for immediate suspension

- unsafe installation not made safe immediately
- credible evidence of unlicensed electrical work
- forged certificates, false photos or fraudulent documentation
- obstruction of an audit
- serious consumer harm
- failure to respond to a critical corrective-action notice
- repeated major breaches
- failure to maintain insurance or required licence/supervision.

Grounds for standard suspension

- failure to complete corrective actions by the deadline
- failure to provide requested audit evidence
- accumulation of 21 or more points in 24 months
- repeated complaint-handling failures
- breach of probation conditions.

Suspension timeframes

Recommended model:

- first suspension: 3 months, or until corrective actions are verified, whichever is longer
- second suspension within five years: 6 months
- third suspension: cancellation review
- no-response suspension: imposed after 10 business days of failing to respond to a formal notice; cancellation considered after 60 business days of continued non-response.

Removal or cancellation from the scheme

Removal should be available where continued accreditation would undermine consumer protection, safety, or confidence in the scheme.

Grounds for removal:

- very serious safety breach
- fraud, falsification or deliberate misleading conduct
- repeated unsafe or substandard work
- systemic consumer harm
- repeated failure to honour warranties or complaints decisions
- repeated misleading advertising or ROI claims
- use of accreditation branding while suspended
- failure to complete corrective actions while suspended
- failure to cooperate with audits
- loss of required licence, insurance or fit-and-proper status
- repeated suspensions.

Provider-level audits by EECA

Minimum provider audit requirements:

- annual EECA initiated independent third-party audit review of each endorsed provider
- annual reporting to EECA
- targeted provider audit where complaint rates, audit failures or enforcement patterns indicate weak scheme control.

Annual provider reporting should include:

- number of accredited installers
- number of new applications, approvals and declined applications
- number of installer audits completed
- percentage of installations sampled
- complaints received, resolved and escalated
- corrective-action notices issued
- average time to close corrective actions
- suspensions, removals and appeals
- common non-compliance themes
- advertising and sales-conduct findings
- referrals to regulators
- changes to criteria, audit tools or code of conduct.

Installer audits:

EECA may choose to employ independent auditors to physically assess the quality of a number of solar installations after they have been completed, on an ad hoc basis

If a provider fails to run credible audits or enforce its own rules, EECA can issue a provider a corrective-action plan within 20 business days, place the provider on endorsement probation, suspend EECA endorsement, or remove endorsement entirely.

