

SOUTH KING

FIRE & RESCUE



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Fire Chief Hank Teran
WFC TAG Liaison
c/o Bainbridge Island Fire Department
8895 Madison Avenue NE
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

April 17, 2013

Dear Chief Teran:

It has come to our attention that the State Building Code Council's Solar PV TAG will be taking public comment regarding the proposed amendments to the 2012 International Fire Code regarding solar photovoltaic power (PV) systems.

From a firefighting operations and safety perspective, the installation of PV systems creates some potential issues that the TAG needs to address before making any recommendations to the full Council.

Access: Proper access and spacing requirements are essential to firefighting operations. Adequate roof access and vertical ventilation remain viable, and often necessary, strategic and tactical options during fireground operations. Vertical ventilation can be used to remove smoke, heat, and dangerous fire gases to improve conditions for occupants that may be unable to evacuate the structure and can be used to assist firefighters in search and rescue as well as locating the fire within the structure. In addition, vertical ventilation can help prevent the spread of fire to other areas of the structure. Without appropriate access to reach different areas of a roof and have areas where a proper opening can be made, the level of safety afforded to occupants and firefighters will be significantly diminished.

Electrical Hazards: Widespread installations of PV systems provide additional opportunities for electrical shock that have not normally been associated with structures in the past. It is essential that proper marking disconnects be provided to ensure a high level of safety for firefighters operating at structures where PV systems are installed.

We greatly hope that the TAG considers the safety of firefighters and occupants of structures equipped with PV system as an overriding priority of any amendment moving forward. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

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