AUSTIN ENERGY GREEN BUILDING

2024 CITY OF AUSTIN ENERGY CODE

COMMERCIAL RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS GUIDE

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

- The City of Austin adopted the 2024 Energy Code with local amendments on April 10, 2025. It takes effect on July 10, 2025.
- The amendments align the Energy Code with other adopted City of Austin codes and climate goals while offering more compliance flexibility.
- Renewable energy systems requirements apply to commercial buildings.
- Solar-ready infrastructure continues to be required unless your project qualifies for an exemption or installs a solar photovoltaic (PV) system.
- Solar PV system installation is not always required, especially if your project uses a performance-based compliance path.

OVERVIEW

This guide helps industry professionals understand the renewable energy provisions of the 2024 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) as incorporated by the City of Austin. Austin's Climate Equity Plan has a goal to achieve net-zero carbon for all new buildings by 2030. In parallel, Austin Energy's Resource, Generation and Climate Protection Plan to 2035 aims to reach at least 205 MW of local solar energy by the end of 2027 and 405 MW of installed local solar capacity by 2035. By adopting the renewable energy provisions of the Energy Code, the City of Austin supports the whole community with clean, renewable energy.

This document does not replace any applicable building, fire or structural codes and ordinances. Users must consult the relevant code documents during design and permitting. The Austin Development Services Department is responsible for interpretation and compliance decisions.

Disclaimer: *This guide is for informational purposes only. For specific requirements, consult the City of Austin Energy Code and Building Technical Codes. This is not design advice; consult a licensed design professional for project specific guidance.*

AUSTIN'S ENERGY CODE

On April 10, 2025, Austin City Council voted to adopt the 2024 IECC and local amendments. The ordinance takes effect July 10, 2025. Renewable energy systems provisions apply to commercial buildings.

Not all sites are suited for on-site renewable energy systems, so the code offers several paths to compliance under either the 2024 IECC C405.15 or ASHRAE 90.1-2022 10.5.1 🔒. The compliance pathways are summarized in Figures 1 and 2 with more details given in the sections below.

Figure 1. 2024 IECC Renewable and Solar Ready Compliance

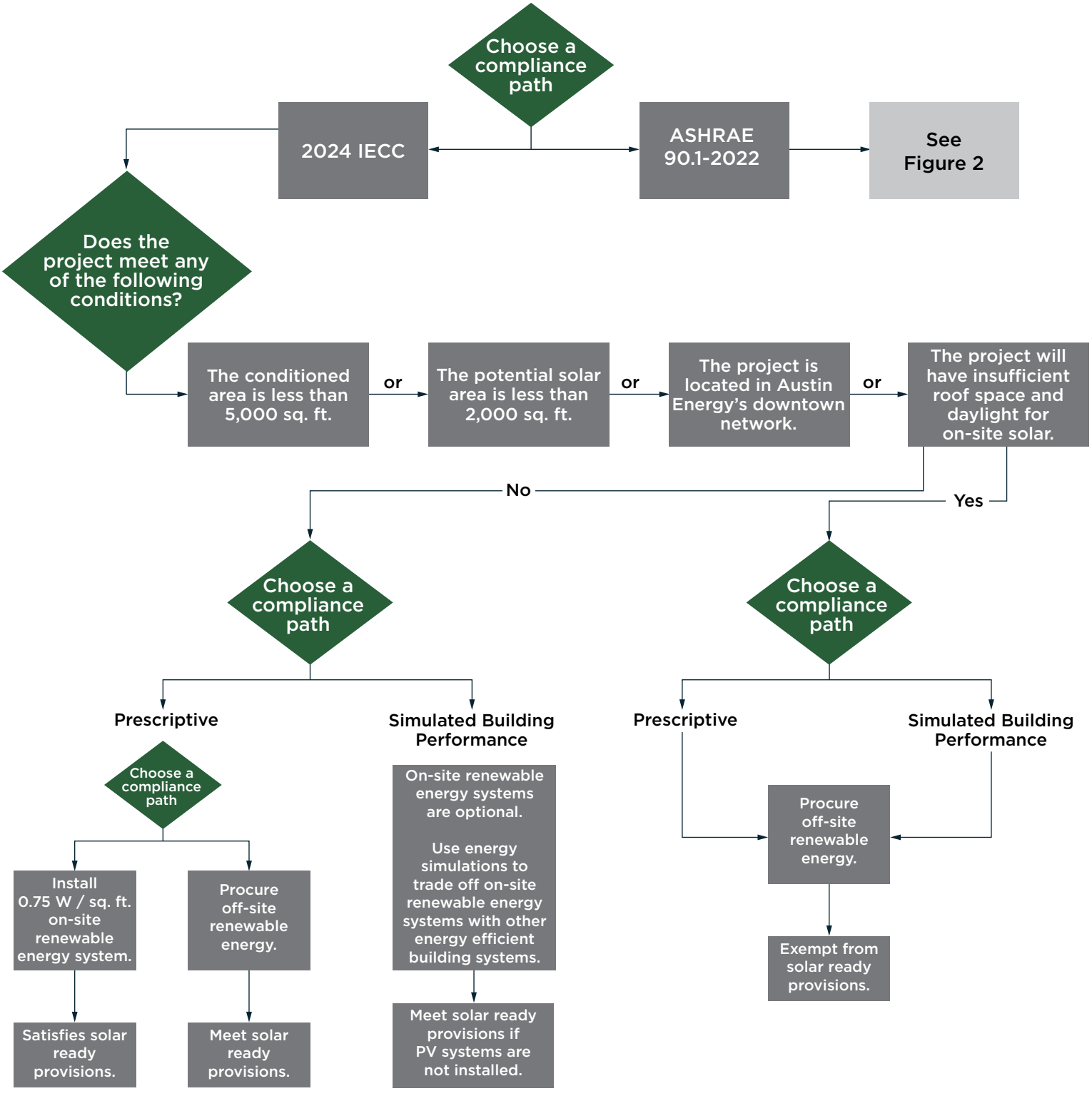
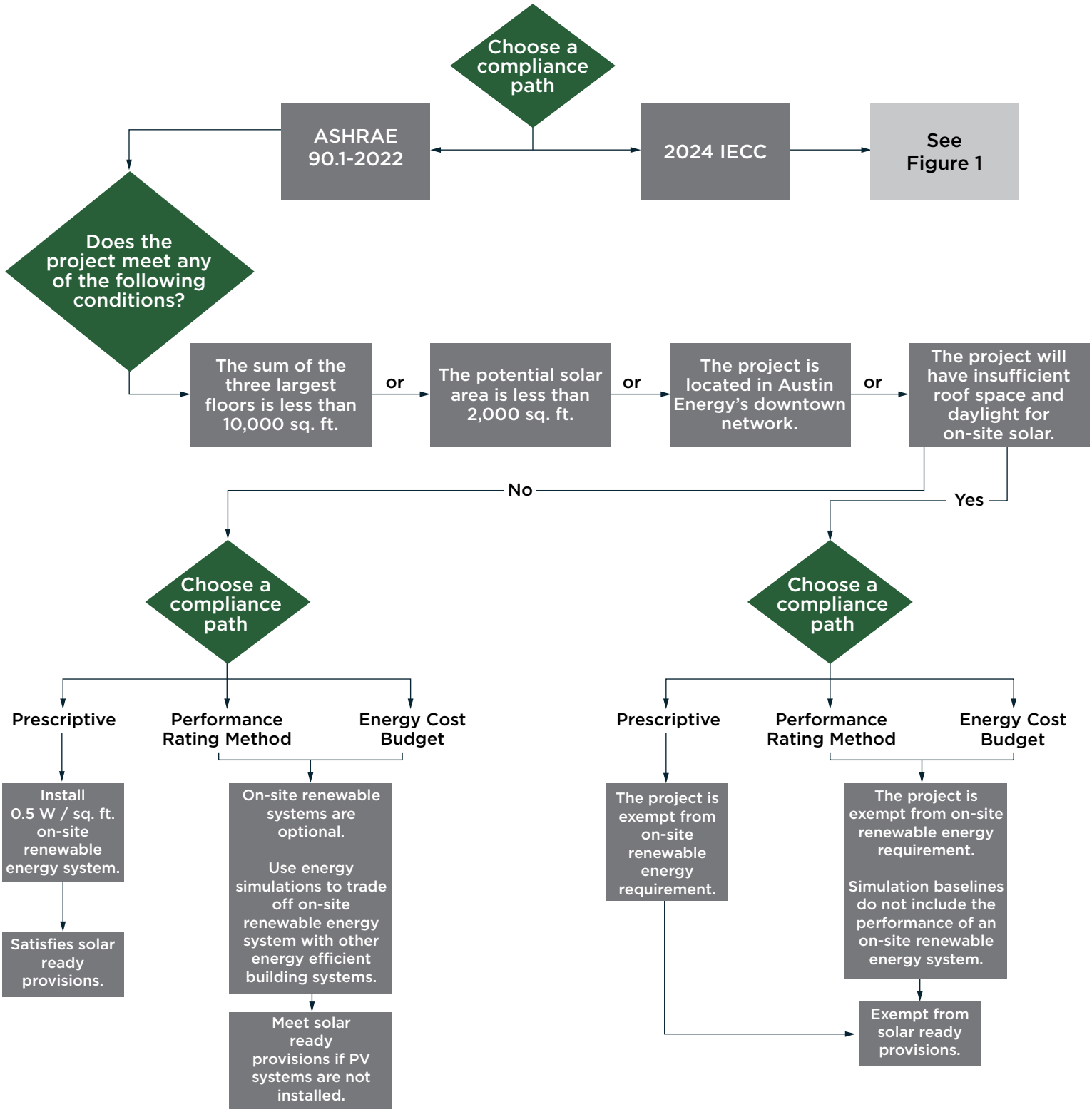


Figure 2. ASHRAE 90.1-2022 Renewable and Solar Ready Compliance



SOLAR READY PROVISIONS

The City of Austin first introduced solar ready provisions in the 2015 Energy Code. These provisions do not require solar PV systems but instead require buildings to be capable of accommodating future solar installations. Project teams must identify suitable roof areas and include the necessary physical and electrical infrastructure for future PV system installation. The 2024 Energy Code retains these solar ready provisions unless a project qualifies for an exemption or installs an on-site renewable energy system.

RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS COMPLIANCE PATHWAYS

The Energy Code provides multiple compliance pathways to give designers flexibility. Projects must follow either the 2024 IECC or ASHRAE 90.1-2022, but cannot combine components from both codes (2024 IECC C401.2). Each code offers both prescriptive and performance-based options.

ON-SITE SOLAR PV

To meet the prescriptive pathway, projects must install a renewable energy system with a minimum capacity of:

- 0.75 W / sq. ft. under the 2024 IECC (C405.15.1), or
- 0.5 W / sq. ft. under ASHRAE 90.1-2022 (10.5.1.1 🔒)

ALTERNATIVES TO ON-SITE SOLAR PV

Off-Site Renewable Energy

Projects using the 2024 IECC prescriptive path may meet the renewable energy requirement by procuring off-site renewable energy through:

- Austin Energy GreenChoice®
- Qualifying Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)
- Qualifying Community Solar subscriptions

All subscriptions or contracts must last at least 10 years and must be deliverable to the building site (2024 IECC C405.15.2).

IECC Performance Path

Projects using the 2024 IECC performance path compare their building's energy cost to a baseline that includes solar (2024 IECC C407.4). A project can avoid installing solar if it meets or exceeds the baseline performance by using alternative strategies, such as:

- High-performance building envelope
- Efficient HVAC or lighting systems
- Advanced controls and automation

ASHRAE Energy Cost Budget Method (ECB)

The ASHRAE ECB path also compares a proposed design to a solar-equipped baseline. Projects can meet compliance without installing solar PV if they match or outperform the baseline using other energy-saving features (ASHRAE 90.1-2022 Chapter 12 🔒).

ASHRAE Appendix G (Performance Rating Method)

Appendix G does not require solar PV in the baseline unless the proposed design includes it. However, the method includes the performance of a minimally compliant solar system when setting the target. PV installation remains optional, and teams can reach the required target using other high-performance design strategies (ASHRAE 90.1-2022 Appendix G 🔒).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

EXEMPTIONS

Not all building sites can support solar PV installations. The code allows exceptions for:

- Sites with insufficient daylight
- Usable roof areas smaller than 2,000 sq. ft.
- High hazard (Group H) buildings
- Sites located in Austin Energy's downtown network
- Small buildings:
  - Less than 5,000 sq. ft. under the 2024 IECC (C405.15.1), or
  - Less than 10,000 sq. ft. under ASHRAE 90.1-2022 (10.5.1.1 🔒)

LOCAL AMENDMENTS

The solar ready provisions in the Energy Code were first written as amendments to the model code and remain as such in the current version. The renewable energy systems section of the model code was amended locally to reflect the exceptions that are given in the solar ready provisions.

LOCAL INCENTIVES

Many utilities and entities offer rebates to offset solar PV system equipment and installation costs. Contact your utility to learn more about eligibility requirements and levels of incentives available.

MORE INFORMATION

2024 IECC: Codes.ICCsafe.org/Content/IECC2024V1.0

ASHRAE 90.1-2022: Codes.ICCsafe.org/Content/ASHRAE9012022P1 🔒 (Subscription Required)

ASHRAE Standards and Guidelines: ASHRAE.org/Technical-Resources/Standards-and-Guidelines/Read-Only-Versions-of-ASHRAE-Standards (Read Only)

2024 Energy Code: AustinTexas.gov/Department/Building-Technical-Codes

Austin Energy Code Questions: EnergyCode@AustinEnergy.com

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