



City of Houston
Building Inspection
CODE WORD 2015

INTERPRETATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF
THE HOUSTON ADOPTED CODES

2015 IBC, 2015 IEBC, 2015 IRC, 2015 IFC, 2020 NEC, 2015 UMC, 2015 UPC,
2015 IECC, and ASHRAE 90.1-2013

CW No:	2015 – B35	Page:	1	of	1
PUBLICATION:	September 27, 2022				
SUBJECT:	Interpretation: SolarAPP+ Alternate Method				
CODE(S):	2015 International Residential Code (IRC) w/ 2020 National Electrical Code (NEC) & 2021 IRC w/ 2020 NEC				
SECTION(S)	Section 104.1				

This Code Word is provided as an interpretation that use of the Department of Energy (DOE) SolarAPP+ computer program utilizing applicable provisions of the unamended model 2021 IRC with the 2020 NEC for installation of residential solar-energy systems on roofs of existing one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses constructed utilizing the Houston *Residential Code* is recognized and approved by the Houston building official as an alternate method of construction that is satisfactory and compliant with the intent of the provisions of the *adopted Houston Residential Code* and the *2020 NEC*, and that the material, method or work offered is, for the purpose intended, not less than the equivalent of that prescribed in the Houston *Construction Code* in quality, strength, effectiveness, fire resistance, durability and safety, to the minimum code provisions applicable of the Houston adopted 2015 IRC and the 2020 NEC.

SolarAPP+ offers a construction code evaluation software that analyzes the specifics of a projects scope of work for installation of residential solar-energy systems utilizing the 2021 IRC and 2020 NEC for expedited permit issuance of eligible typical residential solar energy systems without the need of a typical plan submittal and review process. The SolarAPP+ program aims to reduce permitting and installation time, project cancellations, and expand access to renewable energy.

SolarAPP+ utilizes the most current editions of the 2021 IRC with the 2020 NEC for solar-energy system installation requirements. An analysis of the solar-energy related provisions contained in the 2021 IRC and the 2020 NEC have shown that utilization of the 2021 editions provide an acceptable equivalency to the currently adopted solar-energy code provisions located in the Houston *Construction Code*. A copy of the comparison between the required solar-energy code provisions of the 2021 International Residential Code and the Houston adopted IRC can be viewed [here](#).

Therefore, for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the SolarAPP+ computer program when submitting residential solar-energy systems for building permit, the required 2021 IRC and 2020 NEC code provisions will be accepted and are deemed equivalent to the 2015 Houston *Construction Code* requirements for residential solar-energy systems installed on existing residential structures constructed utilizing the Houston *Residential Code*.

Residential solar systems that do not qualify through SolarAPP+ process and all other solar energy systems must be submitted through the typical plan submittal and review process through the Plan Review Division, and shall document compliance with the Houston adopted 2015 *Construction Code*.

Approved:

Byron D. King
Houston Building Official