

Memo

To: Solar Installers, Customers Installing Solar Systems, Electricians

From: Portland General Electric

Date: July 2026

PGE's Service Upgrade Requirements - Solar Customers

In 2025, PGE added a definition of "service upgrade" to its tariff. Additionally, PGE conducted trainings both for the wider public, and specifically for solar installers, that included information on service upgrades with consistent implementation starting in 2026. This reflected a long-standing requirement that customers upgrading their service also update their utility service equipment to meet current standards. Licensed electricians have routinely replaced customer equipment, such as replacing ringless meter bases with ringed meter bases for the past 30 years. Customer-owned service equipment includes meter bases and weatherheads.

The definition treats solar consistently with other service upgrades. To be a good partner and allow the solar community time to build this into their processes, we will pause this policy until end of 2026.

The pause will apply to customers who meet the following criteria:

- NEC requirements do not trigger a meter base replacement.
- The service panel is not being replaced.
- The service entrance conductors are not replaced.
- The meter base does not have physical/mechanical/electrical defects (examples, the meter base is rusted to a point requiring replacement, the meter jaws are functioning and in good working order).
- The meter base meets current ANSI requirements; A-base or banjo meter bases do not meet ANSI requirements. For context, since 2013 PGE's ESR book has required meter based to be at minimum 100A and meet ANSI C12 requirements (2024 ESR 3.9.2).
- The meter base is mounted on the exterior of the structure, not within a garage, basement, or other enclosed space.
- NESC clearances are met at the site. For more information, see ESR Section 5, Table 12.
- PGE's working clearances are being met at the site. For more information, see ESR Section 5.3.1.

Customers should be aware that by adding a solar system without upgrading the service equipment, they are not avoiding these costs but deferring them. If the service equipment fails or they upgrade their service in the future, the customers will need to correct the service equipment



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that does not meet our requirements including replacing ringless meter bases and relocating meter bases in non-approved locations. Meter bases requiring relocation to meet requirements will also require the relocation of the solar disconnect, if one was required; solar disconnects are to be located within 10 feet of the utility meter.

If any of the above customer meter base criteria is not met, customers, or their contractor, will need to submit a PowerPartner request to identify the service upgrade requirements. For meter base upgrades, if there is a preferred location for the new meter base, please communicate this in the PowerPartner request. This is a standard PGE process for all service requests that is independent of Interconnection requests. Please take into consideration the following elements:

- PGE's meter location criteria are available in ESR 5.2; meters mounted on trees, PGE poles, or in the backyard of a residential structure, do not meet current requirements.
- Underground services supported by direct bury cable will require upgrade. These services were designed in various ways with different locations for the point of connection, so the method of meeting current requirements varies accordingly.
- Overhead service that changed the classification of land in front of service equipment by adding an accessible deck, an RV pad, business truck parking space, or permanent structure like an adjoining house or ADU, likely have modified the required NESC clearance for conductors and/or service equipment. All services need to meet NESC clearances. For more information, see ESR Section 5.3.1.

Customers with customer-equipment, like meter bases, that does not meet current PGE requirements will not pass PGE personnel inspections as of January 1st, 2027. Customers and their solar installers are encouraged to obtain their municipal inspection and request their final PGE inspection by end of November. *well in advance of December 31st.*

