



An Extended Guide · No. 1534

Coordinating Your Roofer, Installer, and Electrician

Who does what, and in what order

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! Read this first — this is professional, on-the-roof work

Putting solar on a roof is expert, permitted work — not a weekend project. It means drilling into your roof and sealing every hole against water for decades, or setting heavy ballast your roof has to carry, all while working at a height where a fall can be deadly and around wiring that is live whenever the sun is up. This guide is here to help you understand and judge that work — so you can hire the right people and ask good questions — not to walk you up a ladder to do it yourself. For any roof-mounted system, use a licensed, insured, properly credentialed solar installer, make sure the required permit and inspection actually happen, and protect your roof's warranty before the first hole is drilled. And please don't climb up to inspect or adjust anything yourself — the roof is their job, not yours. The pros who touch your roof — your roofer, your solar installer, and your electrician — need to be talking to each other before any of them shows up with a ladder.

Let's meet the team behind your roof

A rooftop solar project is not really a one-contractor job. It is a small team — and how well they talk to each other matters as much as any single one of their skills.

I'm Bill, and I help families here in Portage County, Ohio make sense of home projects like this one. Solar quotes tend to focus on panels and pricing, but I get just as many questions about who actually shows up to do the work, and in what order.

The honest answer is that several different professionals are usually involved, each with their own lane — and the projects that go smoothly are the ones where somebody made sure they were all talking before the first ladder went up.

This guide introduces who is typically on that team, the order their work usually happens in, and why getting everyone coordinated early saves you headaches later. None of it requires you to manage a construction site — just to ask the right coordination questions up front.

★ Think of yourself as the conductor, not the player

You do not need to do any of the technical work. You just need to make sure the right people are talking to each other. I'm glad to help with exactly that — (330) 200-8042.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you will understand the moving pieces better than most homeowners do.

- ❑ A rooftop solar project usually involves a solar installer, a roofer, an electrician, sometimes a structural engineer, and your local building department.
- ❑ Each has their own lane — roof condition and warranty with the roofer, mounting and system design with the installer, wiring with the electrician.
- ❑ There is a sensible order to the work: re-roof first if needed, confirm the structure, install, inspect, then connect to the utility.
- ❑ A single point of responsibility — one company coordinating the rest — is usually simpler than you juggling several separate contracts yourself.
- ❑ Get everyone talking to each other before any work begins, not after a schedule conflict or a warranty question comes up.
- ❑ Your job is to ask good coordination questions and confirm it is happening — not to manage the jobsite yourself.

✓ You are allowed to ask who talks to whom

'Will you be coordinating with my roofer and the building department, or is that on me?' is a completely fair question for any installer.

Who is usually on this team

Depending on your project, some or all of these professionals play a part.

- **The solar installer.** Usually the lead — designs the system, handles the mounting, and often the electrical work too.
- **The roofer.** Weighs in on roof condition, handles any re-roofing, and holds whatever workmanship warranty your roof already carries.
- **The electrician.** Handles the wiring and connection to your home's electrical system — often part of the solar installer's own crew.
- **A structural engineer.** Brought in when the roof's ability to carry the load needs a closer, documented look.
- **The building department.** Reviews and permits the work, then inspects it — the independent check behind the whole project.

✓ Not every project needs all five

A straightforward asphalt-shingle install on a sound roof may barely need a structural engineer at all. Your installer and the building department will tell you what your project actually requires.

The solar installer, usually the lead

On most projects, the solar installer is who you meet first and who ends up coordinating the most.

They design the system for your roof, handle the racking and mounting, and in many cases bring their own licensed electrician along to do the wiring. Because they touch the most parts of the project, they are often the natural point of contact.

That does not mean they automatically coordinate with everyone else — some do, some expect you to loop in your roofer yourself. It is worth asking directly rather than assuming.

✓ Ask this early

'Will you be the main point of contact for the roofer, the electrician if separate, and the permit process?' Get the answer before you sign — our guide on choosing a roof-mount solar installer covers what else is worth vetting.

The roofer, guardian of what is underneath

Your roofer's job is not the panels — it is everything the panels sit on top of.

A roofer weighs in on your roof's condition and remaining life, handles a re-roof if one is needed before solar goes on, and holds whatever workmanship warranty came with your roof. They know your roof's history in a way a solar installer, meeting it for the first time, does not.

If your roof is getting close to the end of its life, your roofer is the one who can tell you honestly whether to re-roof first — a question worth asking before, not after, solar panels are on top of it.

✓ There is a whole guide on this timing question

Our guide on roof age and condition, our re-roofing guide, and our guide on protecting your roof's warranty all go deeper into the roofer's side of this project.

The electrician, and the live wiring they handle

Somebody licensed has to connect your new system to your home's electrical panel and the grid — and that is not a place for anyone else to improvise.

Often, the solar installer's own crew includes a licensed electrician, so you may never deal with a separate company. On other projects, the installer subcontracts this piece out. Either way, the electrical work should be done by licensed hands.

Rooftop solar wiring is energized whenever it is daylight, even during a power outage, which is exactly why this piece of the puzzle stays firmly in professional territory. The NEC requires a safety feature called rapid shutdown for exactly this reason.

! Never touch rooftop wiring yourself

Whether the electrician is in-house or subcontracted, this work belongs to licensed professionals only. Leave it to them, full stop.

The structural engineer, when the roof needs a closer look

Not every project needs one, but when a roof's ability to carry the load is in question, an engineer's opinion settles it.

Solar panels and racking add lasting weight to a roof, and whether a given roof can carry that weight depends on its rafters or trusses — their size, spacing, and condition. Sometimes a good installer's own look in the attic is enough; sometimes the permit process calls for a documented structural review.

If an engineer is brought in, they typically work alongside the installer and the building department rather than replacing either one — another reason coordination matters.

✓ Our structural-load guide covers this in depth

If you want to understand what goes into that structural question, our guide on whether your roof can carry solar walks through it further.

The building department, the independent check

One more member of the team is not a contractor at all — it is your local government.

Your local building department, sometimes called the AHJ (authority having jurisdiction), reviews and issues the permits for the project and sends an inspector to check the work afterward. They are not on anyone's payroll but the public's, which is exactly the point.

Your installer usually handles the actual paperwork, but the building department's approval is what confirms everyone else on the team did their job to code.

✓ There's a full guide on this piece

Our guide on permits, inspections, and interconnection covers this piece in full — worth reading alongside this one.

Who does what, at a glance

It helps to see the whole team's roles side by side.

Role	Main job
Solar installer	Design, mounting, usually wiring
Roofer	Roof condition, re-roofing, warranty
Electrician	Wiring — often part of the installer
Structural engineer	Confirms the roof can carry it
Building department	Permits and inspections

✓ Keep this page handy

When a call comes in from an unfamiliar company during your project, this table is a quick way to place who they are and why they are involved.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Who ends up on your team, and how many conversations they need to have, can look different depending on where you live.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town and the suburbs, the team is often compact — one roof, one address, and professionals who are used to working within city or township rules.

- One roof usually means one roofer and one structural question to settle, which keeps coordination simpler.
- Your local building department is likely familiar with solar permits already, having seen plenty in the neighborhood.
- An HOA may add itself to the list of people to coordinate with before visible work begins.
- Utility interconnection is often straightforward with one nearby service point.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, the team can grow — especially if solar is going on a barn, pole building, or other outbuilding roof instead of, or alongside, the house.

- A barn or pole-building roof may need its own structural look, since farm-building framing can be lighter than a house roof's.
- Longer wire runs from a distant outbuilding to the house add one more detail for your installer and electrician to plan together.
- Your county building department may handle rural properties a little differently than an in-town office — worth a direct call to confirm.
- A well-pump property has real reason to want this all coordinated smoothly, since keeping power reliable matters more when water depends on it.

★ Juggling a house roof and a barn roof?

That is a coordination question I help rural families with often. Tell me what buildings are in play and we will map out who needs to talk to whom. Call (330) 200-8042.

There is a right order to all of this

Doing these steps out of order is one of the most avoidable and most expensive mistakes in a solar project.

In general, the sequence runs: re-roof first if your roof needs it, confirm the structure can carry the load, install the system, have it inspected, and then connect to the utility. Each step tends to depend on the one before it.

Skip the re-roof step, for instance, and you may pay later to remove and reinstall the panels just to redo the roof underneath them — a cost and hassle that proper sequencing avoids entirely.

! Out of order gets expensive

Installing solar on a roof that needed replacing first is one of the costliest sequencing mistakes homeowners make. Ask your roofer honestly about your roof's remaining life before you commit to a solar timeline.

Why the order is not just a formality

Each step in the sequence exists because the one after it depends on it being done right.

A structural check matters before installation because it is much harder and more expensive to discover a problem after panels are already mounted. An inspection matters before interconnection because the utility relies on that sign-off to know the system is safe to energize.

None of this is about bureaucracy for its own sake — it is about each step catching problems while they are still simple to fix.

✓ Ask your installer to walk you through your own sequence

A good installer can tell you, in plain terms, where your specific project stands in this order and what comes next.

One point of responsibility, or several separate contracts

There are two basic ways a project like this can be structured, and it is worth knowing which one you are signing up for.

With a single point of responsibility, one company — usually the solar installer — coordinates the roofer, the electrician, the engineer if needed, and the paperwork, so you have one main phone number to call. With a patchwork of separate contractors, you hire and coordinate each piece yourself.

Neither approach is automatically wrong. A single point of responsibility is usually simpler for most homeowners. A patchwork can make sense if you already have trusted pros in mind for each piece — but it puts the coordinating job on you.

★ Ask which one you are getting

Before you sign anything, ask plainly: 'Are you coordinating everyone else, or am I?' Knowing the answer changes how you plan the rest of the project.

Questions that prevent finger-pointing later

When something needs attention after the work is done, it helps enormously to already know who owns what.

Q: If there is a leak later, who do I call first?

Usually your solar installer, since the penetration is theirs — but ask this up front so you already know the answer.

Q: If the structure needs reinforcement, who decides and who pays?

This should be settled during planning, ideally in writing, before installation begins.

Q: Who is responsible if the permit or inspection gets delayed?

A single point of responsibility usually means the installer owns this. In a patchwork setup, it may fall to you to chase it.

Q: If my roofer and my installer disagree about something, who has the final say?

A good team will resolve this collaboratively — and a project with clear coordination from the start rarely gets here.

★ I can help you sort out who owns what

If a proposal is not clear on this, I am glad to look it over with you before you sign.
(330) 200-8042.

The single best thing you can do

If this guide has one message, it is this: get everyone talking to each other before anyone shows up with a ladder.

That might mean asking your solar installer to call your roofer directly, or asking your roofer whether they are comfortable with a specific installer's plan, or simply asking the building department a question before you sign a contract. None of it is complicated — it just has to happen early.

! Before, not during or after

Coordination that happens after work has started is coordination trying to catch up. Insist on it happening before the first hole is drilled or the first wire is run.

Signs the coordination is not happening

A few warning signs suggest a project is not being coordinated the way it should be.

- An installer who cannot tell you whether they have talked to your roofer, or does not think it matters.
- Nobody willing to say plainly who is responsible for pulling permits.
- A rushed timeline that does not leave room for a structural review, if your roof may need one.
- Different pros giving you contradictory answers about the same step, with no one reconciling it.

! Trust your gut here

If the people working on your home cannot describe how they are coordinating with each other, that is worth pausing over before you sign anything.

What good coordination actually feels like

It is easier to spot good coordination by feel than by checklist — here is what it tends to look like.

- You are told the sequence of steps in plain language before work starts, and it matches what actually happens.
- Your roofer and your solar installer both seem to know the other exists, and roughly what the other is doing.
- Nobody seems surprised when the building department calls for an inspection or a document.
- You always know who to call, because someone has already told you plainly.

✓ That feeling is worth paying attention to

If a project feels calm and predictable, that is usually coordination working quietly in the background. If it feels chaotic, that is worth naming out loud.

Keep your own simple paper trail

Even with a great team, it helps to keep your own copy of who is doing what.

- ❑ Names and contact information for your roofer, solar installer, and electrician, if separate.
- ❑ A rough sequence of what happens when — even a handwritten list is fine.
- ❑ Copies of any structural review or engineer's letter, if one was needed.
- ❑ A note of who told you they would handle the permits.

✓ Simple beats fancy

You do not need software or spreadsheets. A page in a notebook with names and dates does the job.

Questions worth asking before you sign anything

These questions, asked plainly, reveal a lot about how a company handles coordination.

Q: Will you coordinate directly with my roofer?

A confident 'yes' is a good sign. If the answer is 'that's on you,' at least you know to plan for it.

Q: Who is my single point of contact if something needs attention?

You want one clear name and number, not a shrug.

Q: What is the order of work for my specific project?

A good installer can describe your sequence in plain terms, not just in general.

Q: If a structural engineer is needed, who brings them in?

Confirm whether that falls to the installer or is something you need to arrange yourself.

★ Bring any proposal to me

If you are comparing a few proposals and want a second set of eyes on how well-coordinated each one sounds, I am happy to help. (330) 200-8042.

Common Questions

The coordination questions I hear most often from families, answered plainly.

Q: Do I need to hire the roofer, installer, and electrician separately myself?

Not usually. Many solar installers coordinate the roofer and electrician for you — but confirm that rather than assuming it.

Q: What if my roofer and my solar installer have never worked together before?

That is common and not a problem by itself, as long as they actually talk to each other about your specific project.

Q: Who tells me the right order for my project?

Your solar installer should be able to, ideally with input from your roofer if a re-roof or repair is part of the picture.

Q: Is it more expensive to have one company coordinate everything?

Cost structures vary by project, so get itemized quotes and ask directly — it is not a question this guide can answer in general terms.

Q: What if I already have a roofer and electrician I trust?

That is a fine reason to consider a patchwork approach — just be clear with your solar installer that you are handling that coordination yourself.

★ Still have a question I did not cover?

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 — there is no such thing as a silly question about how your own project is organized.

Bringing it all together

A rooftop solar project is a team effort, even when it does not feel that way from the homeowner's chair.

Know who is usually involved, understand the sequence their work follows, and ask plainly whether one company is coordinating the rest or whether that job falls to you. Get everyone talking before the first ladder goes up.

You do not have to manage a jobsite to do this well. You just have to ask a few good questions early, and keep track of the answers.

★ Let's map out your own team

If you want help figuring out who you will need and in what order, that is exactly the kind of planning I do. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made coordinating the roofer, installer, and electrician behind a solar project feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

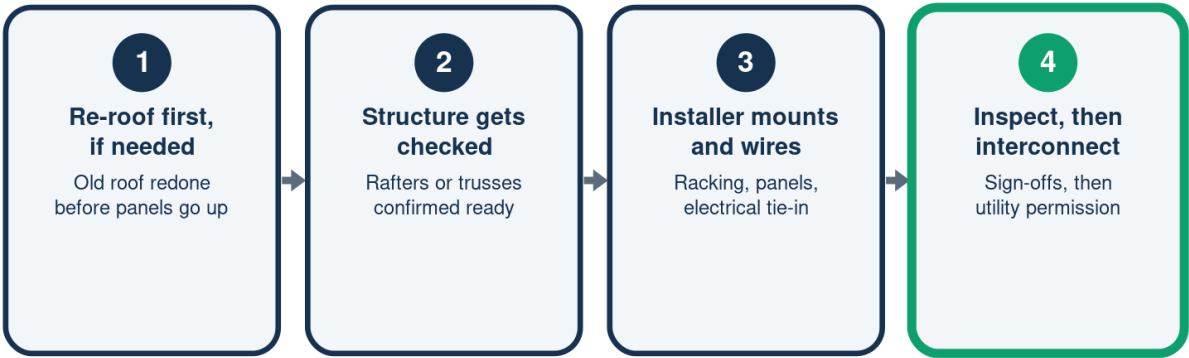
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The Right Order of Operations

Each step depends on the one before it



Doing these out of order usually costs extra time and money.

Who Does What

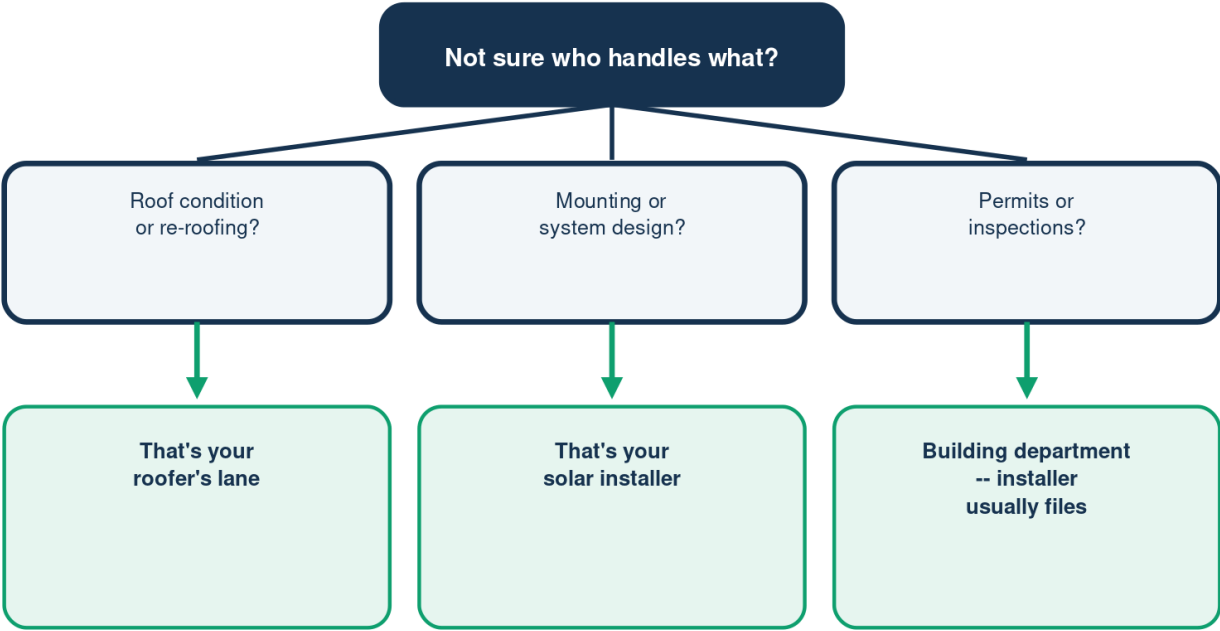
Five roles, five different lanes

Main job	
Solar installer	Design, mounting,
Roofer	Roof condition, re-roofing,
Electrician	Wiring -- often part of the
Structural engineer	Confirms the roof can carry
Building department	Permits and inspections

Not every project needs all five -- ask which apply to yours.

Whose Job Is This?

A quick way to place a question with the right pro



One good installer can coordinate all of this for you -- ask if they will.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.

One Point of Responsibility vs. a Patchwork

Two ways a project can be structured

What it looks like	
Single point of responsibility	One installer coordinates all
Patchwork of contractors	You coordinate each one yourself

Neither is wrong -- but know which one you are signing up for.



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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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