



An Extended Guide · No. 1521

Solar on Tile Roofs

Clay and concrete tile —
careful, skilled mounting

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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. Tile roofs raise the stakes even further — the tiles themselves are brittle and crack underfoot, so this calls for an installer who has genuinely worked on tile before, not one learning on your house.

Solar on tile — a roof that asks for extra care

Clay and concrete tile is a beautiful, long-lived roof — and one of the trickier ones to put solar on. Nothing about that should scare you off. It just means a few things work differently, and this guide walks through them.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. Tile roofs come up less often than shingle or metal in my work, but when they do, the questions are usually the same: can this even be done, and who is qualified to do it? Yes, and I'll help you find them.

Tile is a different animal from the shingle and metal roofs most of the guides in this set focus on. It is not fragile in the sense of falling apart — clay and concrete tile roofs last a very long time — but each individual tile is brittle, and that one fact shapes almost everything about how solar goes on top of it.

★ You don't need to become a tile expert

You just need to know enough to ask the right questions and find someone who has actually done this before. That is exactly what I help with — call or text me anytime at (330) 200-8042.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you'll understand solar on tile roofs better than most people shopping for it.

- ❑ Tile roofs — clay or concrete — are brittle. Walking on tile carelessly can crack it, so the whole job is handled differently from shingle or metal.
- ❑ Installers mount solar on tile one of two ways: tile hooks that reach under the tile, or swapping select tiles for special metal flashing pieces.
- ❑ Tile work takes more labor and more skill than a standard shingle install — and it should take more time, too.
- ❑ The installer's tile experience matters more here than almost anywhere else in this whole guide set.
- ❑ Tile is less common in Ohio than shingle or metal, but plenty of real tile roofs are out there, and solar can go on them.
- ❑ This is still licensed, permitted, professional work at a dangerous height — understand it, then hand it to the right people.

✓ Read it in any order

This guide is meant to be dipped into. Skim it once, then come back to the part you are worried about before you meet with an installer.

What makes a tile roof different

Before we get to mounting, it helps to know what makes tile its own category of roof in the first place.

Tile roofing comes in two common materials, clay and concrete. Both are individual pieces, usually overlapping in rows, rather than one continuous sheet or a field of shingles. That single design fact — lots of separate, rigid pieces — is what makes tile behave so differently once someone needs to walk across it or fasten something to it.

Tile is prized for how long it lasts and how it looks, especially on certain architectural styles. It is a genuinely good roof. It is just not a roof you treat the same way you would treat asphalt shingle when it comes time to add anything on top of it — including solar.

✓ Not sure what you have?

If you are not certain whether your roof is clay, concrete, or something else entirely, that is a fine first question for any installer who comes to look at it — they will know at a glance.

Brittle by nature: why this changes the whole job

The most important thing to understand about tile is also the simplest: each tile can crack under weight it was never meant to carry.

Walking on tile the way you might casually walk across shingle can crack it, especially older tile or tile that has already weathered for years. That risk does not go away just because someone is a professional — it means professionals who work on tile have learned how to move, where to step, and how to protect the roof while they work.

This is not a reason to rule out solar on a tile roof. It is a reason the whole process — from the first look at your roof to the last panel going in — moves more carefully and deliberately than it would on shingle or metal.

! Why this is not a look-and-see project

Because cracked tile is a real risk of careless work at height, this is doubly a job for an insured professional with real tile experience — never a curious homeowner on a ladder, and never a crew learning on your roof.

Two ways installers mount on tile

There is not one universal way to put solar racking on tile. Installers generally reach for one of two approaches.

Tile hooks. A hook-shaped piece is worked in and around the tile to reach the roof structure underneath, without needing to remove the tile itself. Done well, it lets the tile mostly stay put.

Replacing the tile with a flashing piece. In other spots, the installer removes a tile entirely and replaces it with a special metal piece shaped to match, which both anchors the mount and manages water the way the tile did.

✓ Your installer picks the method

Which approach fits often comes down to your specific tile profile and the mounting system being used. This is a design decision for your installer to explain, not one you need to make yourself.

The two approaches, side by side

Here's the plain difference between the two, so the vocabulary does not throw you when you hear it.

Approach	What generally happens
Tile hooks	A hook reaches under or around the tile to the structure below; the tile largely stays in place.
Replacement flashing piece	A tile is removed and swapped for a shaped metal piece that anchors the mount and sheds water.

★ Ask which one, and why

It is a completely fair question to ask your installer which method they are proposing for your roof, and why. A confident, specific answer is a good sign.

Why tile takes more skill and more time

Everything about tile — the brittleness, the two mounting methods, the careful footwork — adds up to a job that simply is not the same as a standard shingle install.

More care while walking the roof, more precision fitting hooks or replacement pieces around an existing tile pattern, and more attention to keeping surrounding tiles intact all take real time. A crew that is used to shingle roofs, doing tile for the first time, is learning on your house.

This is exactly why, more than on any other roof type in this set, the installer's specific tile experience is the thing to ask about first — before price, before scheduling, before anything else.

★ The question that matters most

'How many tile roofs have you actually mounted solar on?' is worth asking plainly. A real answer, with real examples, tells you far more than a glossy brochure. I am glad to help you sort through what you hear — (330) 200-8042.

Waterproofing matters even more here

Every roof mount depends on good waterproofing at each attachment point — and on tile, where the surrounding material is brittle and less forgiving, that detail carries extra weight.

Whether an installer uses a tile hook or a replacement flashing piece, the same underlying idea applies: water has to be guided to shed over the attachment, never into it, the same as any other roof-mounted solar system.

We go into real depth on what good waterproofing looks like, and how to judge it, in our flashing guide — it applies to every roof type, tile included, and is worth reading before you sign anything.

✓ One guide, one job

Consider that flashing guide required reading if you are seriously considering solar on tile. It will make every installer conversation easier.

Finding the right installer for tile

Not every solar installer has worked on tile, and that is fine to hear honestly — as long as they are honest about it.

A tile-experienced installer should be able to describe their approach to your specific tile without hesitation, show you examples of past tile work, and explain plainly how they protect the roof while they are up there.

We cover the full picture of vetting an installer — credentials, insurance, references, red flags — in our guide on choosing an installer. On a tile roof, add one more question to that list: real, specific tile experience.

! An inexperienced crew is the real risk

The biggest risk on a tile roof is not tile itself — it is a well-meaning crew without tile experience learning as they go. Ask the experience question before anything else, and do not be shy about it.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Tile shows up in different places around Portage County than shingle or metal does, and that changes who is asking about it.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town and the suburbs, tile tends to show up on certain upscale or older homes — sometimes a distinctive architectural style, sometimes a roof that was a deliberate, long-lasting choice when it went on. If that is your roof, you likely already know it is a little different from your neighbors'.

- Tile is less common than shingle, so it is worth specifically asking any installer whether they have tile experience, not assuming they do.
- Older tile roofs may have individual tiles that are already brittle from age — worth an honest look before quotes come in.
- A homeowners' association, if you have one, may have its own opinions about anything visible from the street.
- Close-by tie-ins to your electrical panel and meter are usually simpler in town, the same as with other roof types.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, tile is genuinely rare. Barns, pole buildings, and outbuildings around here are almost always metal, not tile, so a rural property considering solar is usually looking at the house roof if tile is involved at all — and even then, tile is the exception rather than the rule.

- If your farmhouse or rural home does have a tile roof, treat the installer-experience question just as seriously as anyone in town would.
- Outbuildings and barns are almost always a better, simpler solar host if yours happen to be metal roofed — see our guide on barns and outbuildings.
- A rural home on a well has extra reason to think through where solar goes, since keeping power on matters more when water depends on it.
- Longer wire runs from an outbuilding, if you go that route instead of the tile house roof, are a detail for your installer and electrician to plan.

★ Not sure tile is even the roof to use?

Some rural and in-town homes with tile also have a garage, porch, or outbuilding roof worth comparing against. Tell me what you've got and we'll think it through together. Call (330) 200-8042.

Roof age and tile condition

Tile roofs can last an impressively long time — but that does not mean every tile on an older roof is still sound.

Before solar goes on, it is worth having the roof, and specifically the tiles in the work area, honestly assessed. Aging or already-cracked tile changes what an installer can safely do and may mean some tiles get replaced as part of the job.

Our guide on roof age and condition covers the broader question of whether to re-roof before you go solar. On tile, add one more layer to that thinking: the condition of the individual tiles themselves, not just the roof as a whole.

✓ An honest look helps everyone

Asking your installer to point out any tile concerns before work starts, rather than discovering them mid-project, saves surprises for both of you.

Yes, structure still matters

Every roof-mounted solar system adds lasting weight, and tile is no exception — if anything, it is one more reason a proper structural look matters.

Tile roofing itself already represents meaningful weight sitting on your home's structure. Adding an array on top is a question for your installer and, often, the permit process — not something to assume works out.

We cover the general structural-load question in its own guide. The short version for tile: a good installer looks at your actual structure rather than guessing, the same as they would for any roof type.

★ Not meant to worry you

Plenty of tile roofs handle solar just fine. The point is simply that someone qualified checks, rather than assumes. Questions about your specific home? Call (330) 200-8042.

Permits and inspections still apply

A tile roof does not get a shortcut around the normal permitted process — if anything, expect a little more attention paid to it.

Building and electrical permits, and the inspections that follow, apply to a tile roof the same as any other. Because tile work involves a less common set of techniques, some local building departments may take a closer look, which is a good thing, not a delay to resent.

An installer who wants to skip permits, on any roof, is a red flag. On tile, where the work is already more specialized, it is an even bigger one.

! No permit, no matter the roof type, is a red flag

If anyone offers to install solar on your tile roof without pulling permits, treat that as a serious warning sign, not a convenience.

Protecting a tile roof's warranty

Tile roofing often carries its own material and workmanship warranties, and putting anything through it is worth thinking through in advance.

Because tile is more specialized and, tile for tile, can be more work to repair or replace than a shingle, coordinating with whoever installed or maintains your roof — and getting warranty answers in writing before the first tile is touched — matters even more here.

Our roof-warranty guide covers this in full for every roof type. On tile, treat that conversation as a must, not a nice-to-have.

! Get it in writing, before, not after

A quick written answer about warranty impact, obtained before work starts, is far easier than sorting out a disagreement afterward.

Why this is even more firmly a professional job

Every roof-mounted solar system in this guide set is professional work. Tile adds its own reasons on top of the usual ones.

- **The brittleness.** Careless foot traffic can crack tile that a trained installer knows how to work around.
- **The height.** The usual fall risk of any roof, tile included, is real and serious.
- **The two mounting methods.** Choosing and executing tile hooks or a replacement flashing piece correctly takes real, specific experience.
- **The structure and the wiring.** The same structural and live-electrical concerns that apply to every roof-mounted system apply here too.
- **The paperwork.** Permits, inspections, and your roof's warranty all depend on the work being done right by the right people.

★ Where I fit in

I do not climb roofs or do licensed roofing or solar work, tile included — and I never will. What I do is help you understand all of this and line up someone who genuinely knows tile. Call (330) 200-8042.

What a good tile install looks like from the ground

You should never need to get up close to judge the work — but there are honest signs worth noticing from below.

- **No visibly cracked or shifted tile** around the array or along the path a crew would have walked.
- **Tidy, consistent hooks or replacement pieces** that look deliberate and match each other, not improvised.
- **Neat wiring** run in clean lines rather than draped across tile.
- **A clean site afterward** — no broken tile fragments left behind, no obvious debris.
- **Paperwork in hand** — permits, inspection sign-offs, and written warranty answers, without you having to chase them down.

✓ Trust your eyes, then trust the paperwork

Tidy work is a good sign from the ground. The paperwork — passed inspections and written warranty answers — is the proof that matters most.

Questions worth asking a tile installer

You are not looking for a technical lecture. You are listening for a clear, specific, unrushed answer.

Q: How many tile roofs have you mounted solar on?

You want a specific, confident answer — ideally with examples — not a vague assurance that they can handle it.

Q: Will you use tile hooks, a replacement flashing piece, or both, and why?

A good installer ties the choice to your specific tile and explains it in plain language.

Q: How will you protect the surrounding tile while you work?

Listen for a real answer about careful movement and protecting the roof, not a shrug.

Q: How is each attachment waterproofed?

You want to hear about proper flashing, tucked in the way water naturally sheds — not sealant alone.

★ Bring the answers to me

If anything you hear leaves you unsure, that is a good reason to call. I will help you make sense of it, honestly, with no stake in the sale. (330) 200-8042.

Ground-level signs worth watching for

Most tile installs go smoothly. It still helps to know what a problem can look like from the ground.

- **Ceiling stains or dampness in the attic** appearing after an install — call the installer's workmanship warranty, do not wait.
- **Visibly cracked, shifted, or missing tile** near the array that was not there before.
- **A production drop** your monitoring shows, which can point to a mounting or wiring issue worth a professional look.
- **Loose-sounding tile or rattling** in wind, which is worth a call rather than a guess.

! Never climb up to check it yourself

Any of these signs is a reason to call your installer, not to get on the roof and look. Our guide on common roof-mount problems covers this in more depth for every roof type.

Bringing in the right team

A tile roof, more than most, benefits from everyone involved actually talking to each other.

Your solar installer, and possibly a roofer if tile needs repair or replacement first, should be coordinating — not working in separate silos and hoping it works out. That coordination is part of what protects your roof's warranty and your peace of mind.

This is exactly the kind of planning I help homeowners think through — who needs to be involved, in what order, and what questions to ask each of them.

★ Let's map it out together

If you are staring down a tile roof and a solar quote and not sure where to start, that is a very normal feeling. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll make a plan.

Common Questions

The questions about solar on tile roofs I hear most often, answered plainly.

Q: Can you even put solar on a tile roof?

Yes — it is done with tile hooks or replacement flashing pieces, by installers who know tile. It just takes more skill and care than a shingle roof.

Q: Will the installer break my tile?

A careless or inexperienced crew might crack some tile; an experienced one knows how to move and work around it. That is exactly why installer experience is the question that matters most here.

Q: Is tile a bad roof for solar?

Not bad — just different, and more specialized. Plenty of tile roofs carry solar arrays successfully with the right installer.

Q: Should I re-roof before going solar if my tile is older?

It depends on the tile's condition, which is worth an honest look first. Our guide on roof age and condition walks through that decision for any roof type.

Q: Is tile more common in Ohio than I think?

It is less common here than asphalt shingle or metal, but it is out there, especially on certain older or upscale homes. If you have it, you are not alone in asking these questions.

★ Still have a question I didn't cover?

That's what I'm here for. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 — there's no such thing as a silly question about your own home.

Bringing it all together

A tile roof is not a reason to rule out solar — it is a reason to be a little more deliberate about who you hire.

Clay and concrete tile is brittle, which shapes almost everything about how solar gets mounted on it — from tile hooks or replacement flashing pieces, to the extra time and skill the work takes, to the waterproofing that matters on every roof type but especially here.

Most of all, finding an installer with genuine, specific tile experience is the single best thing you can do for a smooth project and a roof that stays dry for decades to come.

★ Let's figure out your tile roof, together

Whether you are just curious or already collecting quotes, I am glad to be your patient, plain-spoken second opinion — no sales pressure, ever. 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 putting solar on a tile roof 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.

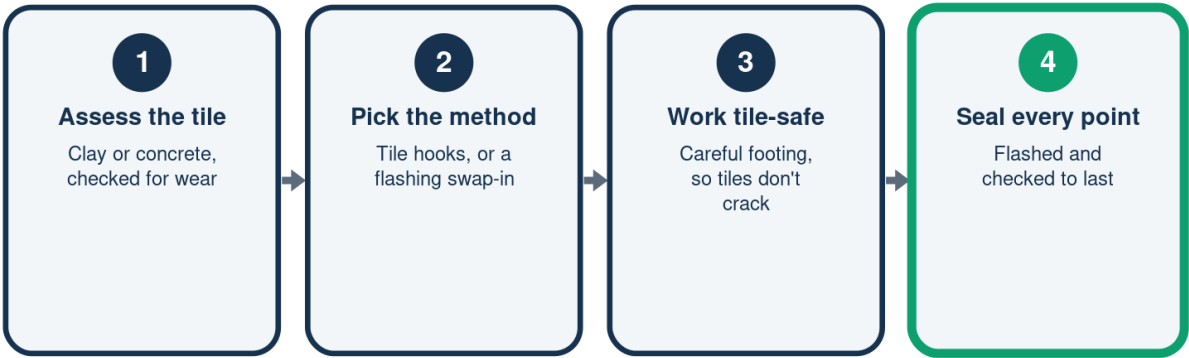
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Mounting a Tile Roof, Step by Step

Why a tile roof takes a slower, more deliberate process



More steps, more care -- that's normal and worth paying for on tile.

Why Tile Roofs Take More Care

Four reasons this roof type is handled on its own terms

Why it matters	
Brittle material	Cracks underfoot
Foot traffic	Careful footing needed
Two methods	Hooks, or a tile swap
Installer skill	Matters most of all

None of this means avoid tile -- it means hire carefully.

Two Ways to Mount on Tile

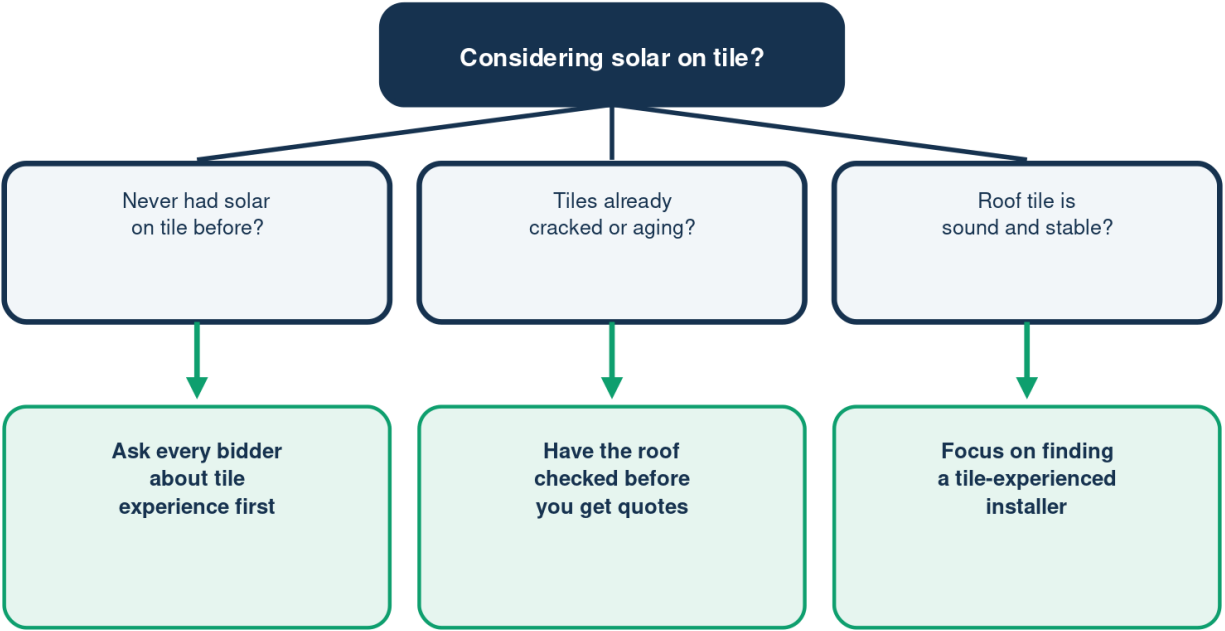
Both are accepted methods -- your installer picks what fits

	Tile hooks	Replacement piece
How it works	Hooks under the tile	Swaps tile for metal
Tile handling	Tile stays in place	One tile removed
Common use	Most tile mounts	Where hooks won't fit
Key skill	Careful placement	Clean flashing tie-in

Your installer picks the method that fits your tile and roof.

Considering Solar on Tile?

Three honest checks before you compare quotes



A tile-inexperienced crew is the single biggest risk on this roof type.

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



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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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