

Photovoltaic (PV) solar systems: Get the facts

General facts

- PV systems are likely prevalent in your response area or in a nearby jurisdiction.
- The signage required for PV systems is **NOT** universal.
- Some PV systems in the U.S. may **NOT** be code-compliant.
- Solar panels are not designed to withstand extreme conditions, such as direct flame contact.

Operational facts

- A foam blanket will not produce sufficient opaque coverage to prevent power generation.
- Both commercial and residential solar arrays pose a hazard to first responders.
- The presence of solar power systems may alter fire or structural conditions and lead to an unexpected collapse.

Electrical hazards

- Even though a control switch may shut down power going to an inverter or into the grid, voltage remains in the system.
- PV arrays can produce electricity even when the sun is not shining on them.
- A shattered PV panel will produce voltage and transmit energy.
- Both older and newer PV panels have the potential to injure first responders.
- Each PV panel may have its own micro-inverter.
- **NOT** all solar power systems can be controlled in the same way. Some systems have a single control point while other have multiple shutoffs and inverters.
- Most incidents involving PV systems involve arcing and/or power surges.