

Harrison County

Zoning Administration



Solar and Wind Energy

Wind and solar energy are clean and renewable energy sources. Harrison County has adopted an ordinance making it easier for property owners to put solar panels and wind turbines on their property. The following is a guide to inform citizens about the County's Solar and Wind Energy Ordinance, Section 829 of the Harrison County Unified Development Ordinance.

What is a Wind Energy System?

Wind Energy Systems produce electricity for homes and businesses. The same wind that cools us off and rustles through the trees can be captured to create electricity. The device that captures the wind is called a wind turbine. Wind turbines come in many different shapes and sizes; the most common ones have three blades and look much like pinwheels. When the wind blows, it turns the blades that then provide energy that can be turned into electricity by a generator. The energy that is produced is measured in Kilowatts (kW). Generally, the larger the turbine, the more Kilowatts it can produce.

Where are Wind Turbines Allowed?

Different areas have different characteristics, so different rules will apply to each. The Ordinance lists the size of turbine allowed in the different zoning districts based on the number of Kilowatts each turbine can produce.

In order for the wind energy system to work safely and properly, it must be placed in an area away from other buildings, cables, and other people's properties.

Wind turbines are allowed in all zoning districts. Some regulations for turbines placed on the ground include the following:

- 1) Small turbines producing less than 3kW shall be placed 10 feet from property lines and buildings.
- 2) Medium turbines producing 2-10 kW shall be the same distance from property lines and buildings as the height of the turbine.

- 3) Systems producing up to 100 kW are permitted in areas zoned for Commercial, Industrial, and Agriculture. The turbine shall be the same distance from property lines and buildings as the height of the turbine. For example, if the turbine is 25 feet in height, it must be 25 feet from property lines.

For turbines placed on a roof, the length of the blades shall be 10 feet or less. The height from the roof to the top of the turbine shall be 25 feet or less. All systems shall have brakes to stop the turbines from moving in winds over 40 mph.

What is a Solar Energy System?

A solar energy system is a series of panels that collect energy from the sun to create electricity. The same bright sun that warms your skin, plentiful on the Gulf Coast, can be used to power the lights and electronics in your home or business. The panels, known as photovoltaic panels, are often constructed of glass, fiberglass, metal, and/or plastic. The panels collect energy from sunlight and use an inverter to change it into energy that is usable as electricity. This energy collected can be stored in batteries and used immediately or saved for a later time when the sun may not be out.

Where are Solar Energy Systems Allowed?

Solar energy systems can be placed both on the roof and on the ground in all zoning districts. Roof-mounted solar panels, which may be mounted on a pole or integrated into a roof, shall be less than 5 feet in height from the roof.

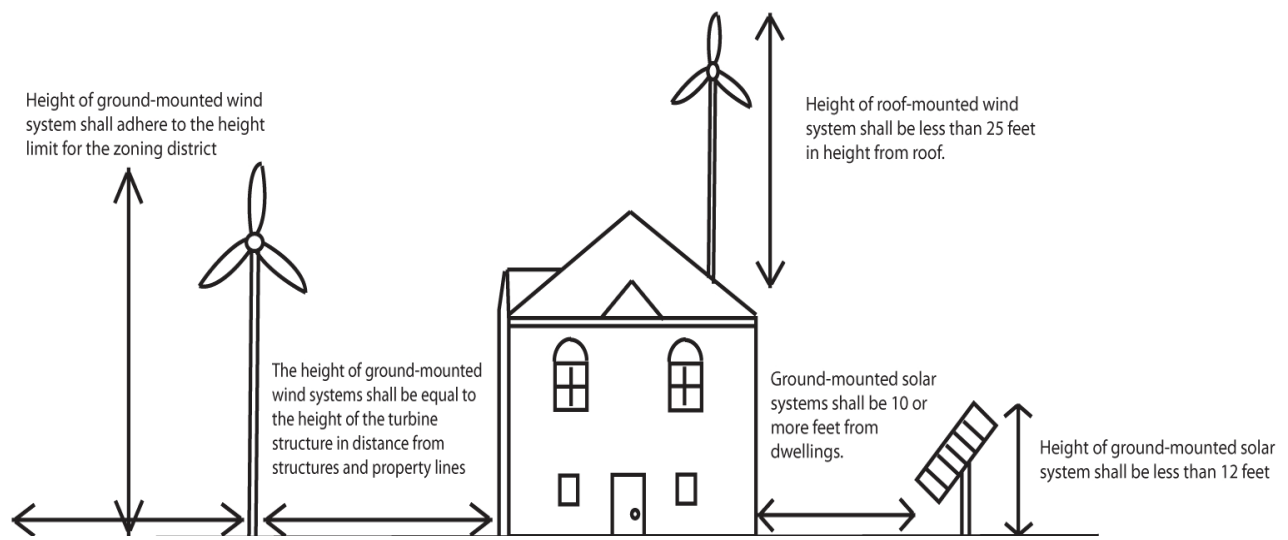


Illustration: The above graphic illustrates setback requirements and permitted heights for wind and solar systems.