

Republic of Ireland

Status

A brief description of the most important elements in the Republic of Ireland regulations and certification/subsidy schemes related to solar thermal products is given here below. The description is valid for December 2007.

Regulations

Building Regulation (general)

The installation of solar panels up to 12 sq. metres aperture area, or 50% of total roof area, whichever is less, will be exempted development subject to the following conditions:

- A 15cm maximum distance between the plane of a pitched roof and the solar panel
- A 50cm maximum distance between the plane of a flat roof and the solar panels, and
- That panels should be at least 50cm from the edge of the roof.

The exemptions provide for the same 12 sq metre aperture area in respect of free-standing arrays as applies to building mounted panels. Therefore, and as is the case with building mounted panels, arrays of this size and under are exempt from planning permission requirements, subject to some conditions. These require that:

- Stand-alone panels must be no more than 2m in height,
- Such panels must be located behind the front wall of the house, and
- A minimum space of 25 sq m of useable space must remain for householders own private use.

Testing
No UK or Irish test institutes are accredited to perform EN testing (on solar thermal products) or for granting Solar Keymark.

Certification

- Product certification: Greener Homes Grant scheme registration criteria for solar thermal products are : collector must be tested in accordance with EN12975 or EN12976 and must be tested by an accredited laboratory, installation / user manuals must be submitted in English, and minimum warranty period of 5 years.
No national requirement for above.
- Installer certification:
 - Voluntary certification scheme for installers of solar thermal systems through the Renewable Energy Installer Academy (REIA), this in a North South body managed by Action Renewables in Northern Ireland and Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) in Ireland.

Subsidies

Through the Greener Homes Scheme administered by Sustainable Energy Ireland <http://www.sei.ie/index.asp?locID=1305&docID=-1> , homeowners can apply for a grant of €250 per m² of flat plate collectors, and €300 per m² of evacuated tube collectors, up to a maximum of 6m².

Registered products are listed on the SEI website (see link above), and also registered installers.