



State of Idaho

DIVISION OF BUILDING SAFETY

“Building a Safer Idaho”

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Division of Building Safety Issues Caution to Solar Power Users and Developers

(Meridian, Idaho) – As solar power generation becomes more technically feasible and less expensive, an increasing number of individuals are looking to small solar installations as a way to fulfill their household electricity needs and, in some cases, to offset the cost of the solar power equipment by selling excess electricity to utility companies.

Idaho utility customers who choose to do so are allowed to produce power on a small scale to offset their energy use through a utility’s net metering service. The Idaho Public Utilities Commission (PUC) establishes rules and rate policies for such arrangements.

The Idaho Division of Building Safety (DBS) has become aware of an increasing number of unlisted, non-approved and potentially hazardous component systems being marketed to small solar photovoltaic power producers as a means of getting their excess electricity delivered to the power grid. These devices are generally marketed as “Plug and Play Grid Tie Inverters” and purport to deliver electricity to the grid by simply plugging the inverter into an ordinary wall socket.

Such devices are not listed by UL or any other Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL), are not approved for use in Idaho or any other state under the National Electrical Code (NEC), and may present a serious electric shock hazard.

Individual homeowners, small businesses and others who consider developing any on-site electrical generation and who contemplate offsetting their use through a utility company’s net metering service are urged to:

- Consult their local utility for their rules and processes for interconnection
- Consult the electrical inspectors of their local building department or the Idaho Division of Building Safety for guidance and inspection certification
- Employ a licensed electrician or certified installer familiar with on-site generation, utility requirements and the NEC.

Electrical inspections save lives. DBS and most local jurisdictions will gladly work with individuals and companies from the start of a project through completion to ensure the installation not only achieves the desired result but that it meets all applicable codes and therefore performs in the safest, most efficient manner possible.

If you have questions about electrical safety, feel free to call DBS at 1 800 955-3044.

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