

BACK UP OPTIONS FOR POWER OUTAGES

PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS WITH BATTERY BACKUP

Photovoltaic (PV) systems by themselves do not provide power to your home when the electric grid is down. Battery backup systems are available that will be charged during daylight hours and will kick in when the PG&E power goes off. Solar contractors can advise you on sizing the batteries for your electrical loads and amount of time before they run out of power. Additionally, some systems are available with one outlet that works when the power is out.



PERMITTING PROCESS

The permitting process for PV and battery systems is straightforward. No Design Review is required. A building permit is required. Most PV contractors have a standard permit submittal package that has all the information we need to process the building permit. Once the permit has been approved and issued, construction can proceed and the work will be inspected. After a final inspection by the Building Department, the system is tied into the PG & E grid.

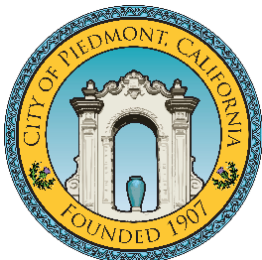
Submit an application for a PV or battery system to solar@piedmont.ca.gov. The building permit form is available on the Building Department [webpage](#).

PV ADVANTAGES

1. No design review required
2. No additional information required for the building permit.
3. Reduced electrical bills.
4. Reduces greenhouse gas footprint.

PV DISADVANTAGES

1. Backup electricity limited by battery capacity and weather conditions



CITY OF PIEDMONT

CALIFORNIA

Planning & Building Department

510.420.3050

solar@piedmont.ca.gov

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PERMANENT STANDBY GENERATORS

Permanent standby generators are fueled by natural gas, or, more rarely, by gasoline, propane, or diesel. The generators kick in when the power goes out and run until power comes back on. In case of a large earthquake, the natural gas lines may be out of service. The units must be installed by a licensed electrician. The electrician or vendor can advise you on sizing the unit for the anticipated loads.



PLANNING PERMIT PROCESS

The permitting process for a generator starts with approval from the Planning Department. Proposed generators Director Design Review Permit (DRP-D) application, as long as criteria such as setbacks are met (typically 5 feet from side and rear property lines; 20 feet from the street). If the proposed generator does not meet the criteria, it will be reviewed by the Planning Commission. The DRP-D process takes about 45 days to process, while Planning Commission meets once a month to consider applications. Both processes require notification of neighboring property owners. Additionally, the Piedmont Building Code requires that the noise level from the generator to be 50db or less at the nearest property line. Measures needed to meet those requirements, such as a screen or fence, will be part of the planning approval. *If the generator is proposed for an individual with a medical need, an Expedited Design Review process may be applicable.*

BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

Once you have obtained approval from the Planning Department for the installation of the generator, you will need a building permit. The permit submittal information will be reviewed by the Building Department for conformance. Once the permit has been approved and issued, construction can proceed and the work will be inspected. After the work has passed final inspection, you must contact PG&E to notify them of your installation. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District also has regulations on the operation of standby generators. They have some information on their website at www.baaqmd.gov/~media/files/engineering/permit-handbook/baaqmd-permit-handbook.pdf.

Submit an application for a generator to buildingpermits@piedmont.ca.gov. The DRP permit form is available on the Planning Department [webpage](#). The building permit form is available on the Building Department [webpage](#).



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ondutyplanner@piedmont.ca.gov 510.420.3050 buildingpermits@piedmont.ca.gov

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GENERATOR ADVANTAGES

1. Backup electricity not limited by weather conditions
2. For those with a medical need to install a backup generator, there is an expedited design review process.

GENERATOR DISADVANTAGES

1. Will require design review by Director (45-day process) or by Planning Commission (60-day process), and notification of neighbors.
2. Must meet noise requirements specified by Building Code
3. Can release noxious fumes
4. In case of gas leak or earthquake, natural gas generators may not work

NON RESIDENTIAL INSTALLATIONS

For commercial facilities or equipment in the public right-of-way, see Wireless Communications Facilities in Piedmont City Code. Chapter 17, Article 3 Division 17.46.



IF YOU NEED BACK UP POWER FOR MEDICAL REASONS:

If you need a back-up generator to keep medical equipment or devices for the physically disabled operating in the case of an outage, an Expedited Design Review permit may be applicable. The generator must meet the underlying zoning requirements for the property (see Piedmont City Code Chapter 17, Article 2). This application requires “sign-off” from the immediate adjacent affected neighbors.



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BACK UP OPTIONS FOR POWER OUTAGES

WARNING: AVOID PORTABLE GENERATORS

There are **exhaust, fire, and electrical hazards** present when using a portable generator, causing **significant safety risks**. Therefore, the Piedmont Fire Department **strongly discourages** the use of portable generators for emergency power.

PG&E has some information on their website about the safety of portable generators:
www.pge.com/en_US/safety/electrical-safety/electric-generator-safety/electric-generator-safety.page?WT.mc_id=Vanity_backuppower



CONTACT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

If you have a legitimate, life-threatening, medically related condition that would require electricity during a power outage or disaster, please contact the Piedmont Fire Department so we may add you to the list of residents that will need support during a power outage.

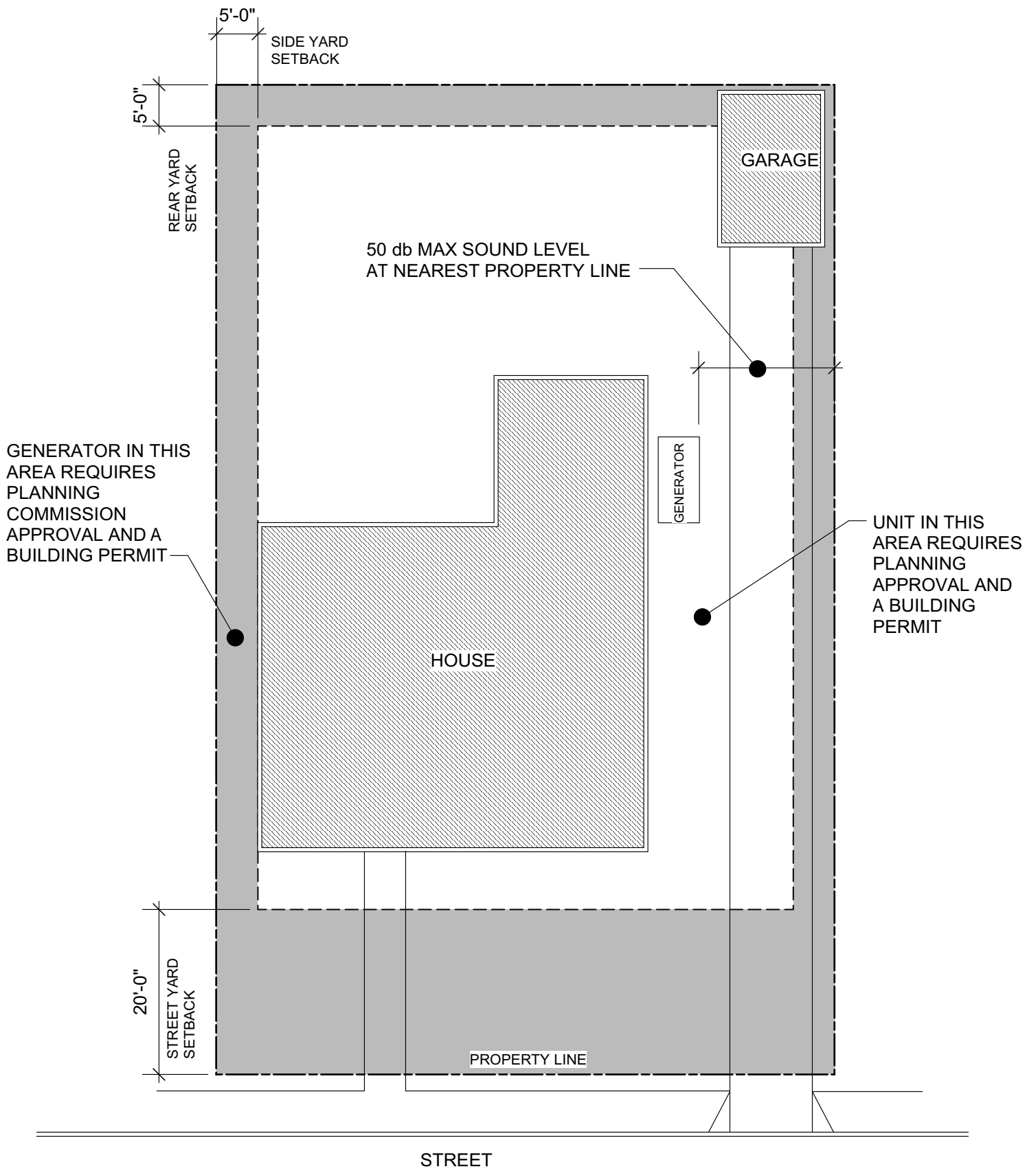
The Piedmont Fire Department can be contacted at 510-420-3030.



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If the generator is going to be installed inside the setbacks, the unshaded area of the diagram, the installation will need a Director Design Review Permit (D-DRP), along with a building permit. If the generator is located within the setbacks, the gray area of the diagram, it will need Design Review Permit (DRP) from the Planning Commission. Both processes require notification of neighboring property owners. Additionally, the Piedmont Building Code requires that the noise level from the generator to be 50db or less at the nearest property line. Measures needed to meet those requirements, such as a fence, will be part of the planning approval.

BACK UP GENERATOR LOCATION DIAGRAM