



Alternative Energy Systems (AES)
Licensing for Qualified Roofing Contractors Needed

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The Code of Virginia stipulates that any Alternative Energy Systems (AES) installation requires an additional license designation of “Specialty Contractor.” The current AES License can only be obtained with proof of two years of prior AES experience for Class C, three years for Class B, and five years for Class A. Under this guidance, roofing contractors cannot obtain permits that would allow them the opportunity to gain the appropriate related experience to apply for this additional designation.

The Code of Virginia (*18VAC50-22-30*), defines “Roofing contracting” as “...the service that provides for the installation, repair, removal or improvement of materials common to the industry that form a watertight, weather resistant surface for roofs and decks. This includes roofing system when installed in conjunction with a roofing project, application of damp proofing or waterproofing, and installation of roof insulation panels and other roof insulation systems above roof deck. The CBC and RBC classifications and the HIC and CIC specialties also provide for this function.” Since AES installation falls within the scope of the roofing contractor definition, we request that roofing contractors who have five years of roofing experience, take the AES class, and pass the exam be approved for AES licensure.

The two years of AES experience requirement restricts the number of qualified Roofing Contractors who can successfully and competitively serve residential and commercial property owners. In addition to curtailing business opportunities for roofing contractors, property owners are at risk by turning to non-roofing specialists to install roofing solar systems. Problematic examples include (a) altering roofing systems after original installation, resulting in “non-warranted” work, voiding future coverage for roofing systems, and (b) solar systems installed on a subpar roofing system, resulting in an additional financial burden for the property owners.

Property owners could work directly with roofing contractors by granting AES licensure for qualified roofing contractors, allowing a warranted installation of roofing systems in conjunction with photovoltaic systems, including manufacturer warranty responsibilities. Property owners would be better protected by reducing solar installs on poor roofing substrates/systems. Furthermore, AES licensed roofing contractors would provide additional opportunities for Virginia consumers to benefit from alternative energy incentives while lowering ownership costs.

AES licensure for qualified, trained roofing contractors will create a competitive environment benefiting contractors and property owners alike.

Contact Information

VARP Government Affairs Chair – Rick Heath, Architectural Exterior Solutions
(757) 375-5731 / rick@aesolutions.org

VARP Executive Director – Heather Greenwell, CAE, VARP Office
(804) 442-2522 / heather@varoofingprofessionals.org