



## California Solar Shade Control Act<sup>1</sup>

25980. This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the Solar Shade Control Act. It is the policy of the state to promote all feasible means of energy conservation and all feasible uses of alternative energy supply sources. In particular, the state encourages the planting and maintenance of trees and shrubs to create shading, moderate outdoor temperatures, and provide various economic and aesthetic benefits. However, there are certain situations in which the need for widespread use of alternative energy devices, such as solar collectors, requires specific and limited controls on trees and shrubs.

25981. As used in this chapter, "solar collector" means a fixed device, structure, or part of a device or structure, which is used primarily to transform solar energy into thermal, chemical, or electrical energy. The solar collector shall be used as part of a system which makes use of solar energy for any or all of the following purposes: (1) water heating, (2) space heating or cooling, and (3) power generation.

25982. After January 1, 1979, no person owning, or in control of a property shall allow a tree or shrub to be placed, or, if placed, to grow on such property, subsequent to the installation of a solar collector on the property of another so as to cast a shadow greater than 10 percent of the collector absorption area upon that solar collector surface on the property of another at any one time between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., local standard time; provided, that this section shall not apply to specific trees and shrubs which at the time of installation of a solar collector or during the remainder of that annual solar cycle cast a shadow upon that solar collector. For the purposes of this chapter, the location of a solar collector is required to comply with the local building and setback regulations, and to be set back not less than five feet from the property line, and no less than 10 feet above the ground. A collector may be less than 10 feet in height, only if in addition to the five feet setback, the collector is set back three times the amount lowered.

25983. Every person who maintains any tree or shrub or permits any tree or shrub to be maintained in violation of Section 25982 upon property owned by such person and every person leasing the property of another who maintains any tree or shrub or permits any tree or shrub to be maintained in violation of Section 25982 after reasonable notice in writing from a district attorney or city attorney or prosecuting attorney, to remove or alter the tree or shrub so that there is no longer a violation of Section 25982, has been served upon such person, is guilty of a public nuisance as defined in Sections 370 and 371 of the Penal Code and in Section 3480 of the Civil Code. For the purposes of this chapter, a violation is hereby deemed an infraction. The complainant shall establish to the satisfaction of the prosecutor that the violation has occurred prior to the prosecutor's duty to issue the abatement notice. For the purpose of this section, "reasonable notice" means 30 days from receipt of such notice. Upon expiration of the 30-day period, the complainant shall file an affidavit with the prosecutor alleging that the nuisance has not been abated if the complainant wishes to proceed with the action.

---

<sup>1</sup> California Codes, Public Resource Code Sections 25980-25986. The California Public Resources Code can be founds at <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>.

The existence of such violation for each and every day after the service of such notice shall be deemed a separate and distinct offense, and it is hereby made the duty of the district attorney, or the city attorney of any city the charter of which imposes the duty upon the city attorney to prosecute state infractions, to prosecute all persons guilty of violating this section by continuous prosecutions until the violation is corrected. Each and every violation of this section shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

25984. Nothing in this chapter shall apply to trees planted, grown, or harvested on timberland as defined in Section 4526 or on land devoted to the production of commercial agricultural crops. Nothing in this chapter shall apply to the replacement of a tree or shrub which had been growing prior to the installation of a solar collector and which, subsequent to the installation of such solar collector, dies.

25985. Any city, or for unincorporated areas, any county, may adopt, by majority vote of the governing body, an ordinance exempting their jurisdiction from the provisions of this chapter. The adoption of such an ordinance shall not be subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (commencing with Section 21000).

25986. Any person who plans a passive or natural solar heating system or cooling system or heating and cooling system which would impact on an adjacent active solar system may seek equitable relief in a court of competent jurisdiction to exempt such system from the provisions of this chapter. The court may grant such an exemption based on a finding that the passive or natural system would provide a demonstrably greater net energy savings than the active system which would be impacted.

---

For more information about solar energy see [www.sdenergy.org/solar/solar\\_energy.html](http://www.sdenergy.org/solar/solar_energy.html) or contact the San Diego Regional Energy Office.

**San Diego Regional Energy Office**  
**401 B Street - Suite 800**  
**San Diego, CA 92101**  
**Toll Free: 866-SDENERGY (733-6374)**  
**Fax (619) 595-5305**  
**[www.sdenergy.org](http://www.sdenergy.org)**