

# Is it illegal to dismantle photovoltaic panels in a factory



## Overview

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Most panels contain lead and cadmium - toxic materials classified as hazardous waste under EPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Wait, no - it's not just about legality. Let's break down the real risks: Universal waste handlers that accept more than 100 kilograms (or 200 pounds) of PV modules from any offsite source or that generate 5,000 kilograms (or 10,000 pounds) or more of PV modules in the calendar year 2024 shall submit a completed written annual report by February 1 of 2025. On this page: Are Solar Panels Hazardous Waste?

Solar panels provide clean, renewable . In May 2024, California fined a demolition company \$87,000 for improper panel dismantling. As of January 1 . Owners of solar power plants that have gradually reached the end of their useful life need to understand their disposal options and responsibilities, or risk being out of compliance with state or federal regulations. First, understand the current regulatory environment Step one in developing an . A federal plan to manage the coming "solar waste tsunami" of retired panels has missed its start date, leaving states and the solar industry to patch together their own rules for retiring the panels. Workers remove solar panels from an industrial building.

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### The Growing Need for Solar Panel Disposal Regulations

Instead, solar panel disposal falls under broader waste management regulations. The primary federal law guiding solar panel disposal is the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

### Solar Panel Disposal: Recycling, Reclamation And Risk

Solar panels only qualify for a hazardous waste exemption when they're recycled, and not every state has an applicable exemption. Our research found that Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Maine,



### A Guide to Decommissioning Solar Panels

Learn the full scope of solar decommissioning. Key topics include panel recycling, dismantling best practices, and calculating cost estimates for PV facilities.

### What solar plant operators need to know about panel disposal

Though solar panels are not addressed specifically by the federal government, their disposal is governed by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), which is overseen by





## End-of-Life Solar Panels: Regulations and Management

Background  
Are Solar Panels Hazardous Waste?  
Overview of Hazardous Waste Regulations  
State Solar Panel End-Of Life Policies  
Additional Resources  
Federal solid and hazardous waste regulations (i.e., the RCRA requirements) apply to solar panels when they are discarded. When a solar panel reaches the end of its usable life or is otherwise discarded, it becomes solid waste. Solid waste is regulated federally under RCRA Subtitle D and through state and local government programs. The discarded sol See more on [epa.gov](http://epa.gov)  
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[Are solar panels recycling and decommissioning regulated?](#)



**What happens if a solar panel is discarded?**



[Will EPA add solar panels to Universal Waste Regulations?](#)



## **Can hazardous waste solar panels be recycled?**

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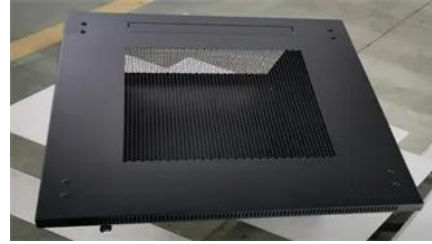
## **Is It Illegal to Dismantle Photovoltaic Panels? What You Must Know in**

Meta description: Wondering if dismantling solar panels could land you in legal trouble? Discover the complex regulations, recycling requirements, and hidden risks of PV panel disposal.



## **As EPA Stalls, States Are Left to Handle Solar Panel Waste**

So far, 35 states have adopted some form of solar decommissioning or waste policy, according to a tracker managed by the N.C. Clean Energy Technology Center. Of them, less than 10



## **End-of-Life Solar Panels: Regulations and Management**

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## [Crafting an Effective Solar Decommissioning Plan: Key Considerations](#)

Solar panels usually last 25-30 years before decommissioning becomes necessary. Facility owners must start decommissioning within 12-18 months after operations stop in most areas.



## California Regulations , Solar Panel Recycling

Across the U.S., there are varying regulations preventing the landfilling of solar panels. The industry is witnessing a growing number of states and local jurisdictions implementing decommissioning plans



## Photovoltaic Modules (PV modules)

DTSC's new PV modules regulation, allowing them to be managed under California's universal waste program, was recently approved by Office of Administrative Law (OAL) and will be



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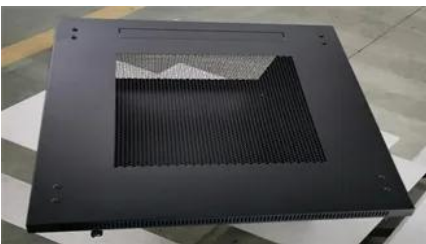
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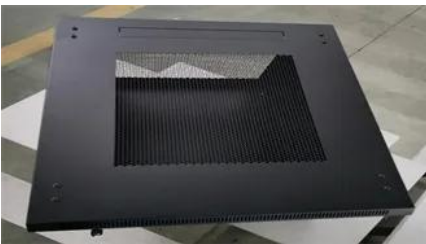
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