

Overview of the Interconnectivity Application Process:

The intent of the interconnection application process is for small, low-impact distributed generation projects to be reviewed quickly, the technical and equipment requirements to be only as complex and expensive as required for safe operation, and fees paid by the customer to be fair and justified. The larger the project and the more complex the interconnection scheme, the higher the costs, both for studying the interconnection scheme and for the necessary electrical equipment to interconnect.

In some cases, the cooperative may reject the proposed DG project interconnection for reliability or safety issues. In these cases, however, the cooperative will work closely with the applicant in an attempt to resolve these issues.

Normally, it is anticipated that an interconnection agreement will be signed before the applicant begins construction of the generation project. However, an applicant may choose to begin construction earlier and assumes any risk associated with possible rejection of the application. Habersham EMC approval is required before interconnection of any distributed generation project.

The application process is the series of steps to be followed by a prospective distributed generation owner/operator within the Habersham EMC service area. HEMC requires the following information:

- Location
- Technical and design parameters
- Operational and maintenance procedures

HEMC intends to keep this process simple, however; the safety and stability of the cooperative distribution system must be protected.

Initial Review

Once a completed application form and fee are submitted, the form will be reviewed.

When conducting the interconnection study, the cooperative seeks to:

- Base study scope on the characteristics of the DG at the proposed location.
- Consider the potential costs incurred and benefits as a result of DG interconnection.
- Provide a cost estimate to the DG applicant prior to initiation of any studies, if any study costs are to be charged to the applicant.
- Make written reports and study results available to the DG applicant
- Use the best efforts to meet the application processing schedule, or notify the DG applicant why it cannot meet the schedule and provide estimated dates for application processing and interconnection.

If the proposed DG project is 2 MW or less and the equipment meets the necessary codes, standards and certification then it will qualify for the “Fast Track” screening process. This process has three crucial concerns:

- Will the addition of the proposed project allow generation on the existing circuit to exceed 15% of the line section annual peak load?
- Will the proposed DG project, along with other generation on the circuit, contribute more than 10% to the maximum fault current?
- Will the addition of the proposed project cause any protective devices to exceed 87.5% of the short circuit interrupting capability?

If these questions are answered satisfactorily, then the applicant and HEMC will sign an interconnection agreement and the construction process may begin. If any of the questions is unsatisfactorily answered, then the application must undergo the study process.

If the proposed DG project is more than 2 MW, not certified or not included in the Fast Track process, the application will go through the study process.

The study process consists of a minimum engineering review, system impact study and a facilities study. If at an initial meeting, the parties decide if a minimum engineering review is necessary. The minimum engineering review is used to identify any negative system impacts resulting from the proposed interconnection. If it is determined that the review is not needed, the parties shall proceed to a system impact study or the interconnection agreement.

A system impact study evaluates the impact of the proposed interconnection on the reliability of the electric system. If the preliminary system impact study reveals a potential for negative effects on the distribution system, HEMC shall send the applicant a distribution impact study agreement. This agreement will include an outline of the scope of the study and a non-binding, good faith estimate of the cost to perform the study. Once the customer agrees to pay the cost of the study, the process will continue.

If, the system impact study determines that a facilities study is necessary the applicant will receive a facilities study agreement. This agreement will include an outline of the scope of the study and a non-binding, good faith estimate of the cost to perform the study. Under this agreement the design for any required interconnection facilities and/or upgrades will be performed. Once this study is complete and the applicant agrees to pay for the identified interconnection facilities and upgrades, HEMC will provide the applicant an interconnection agreement within five business days.