

Getting Started with the Customer Interconnection Tool FAQs

Hawaiian Electric's Guide for Contractors



**Hawaiian
Electric**

Frequently Asked Questions



General

Q: What is the Customer Interconnection Tool?

A: The Customer Interconnection Tool (CIT) is an online platform for customers and/or contractors to submit applications for our Customer Self Supply and future programs.

Q: What's different about this tool compared to the current process for submitting applications to those programs?

A: Currently Hawaiian Electric receives applications in hardcopy form with printed attachments, and the application process is a little different for all three companies. The new tool allows applicants to submit all of their information, including electronic documents, online. They also have the ability to see how their application is progressing through the process and to receive regular status updates as various timelines are met. It will also allow greater functionality for the Distributed Energy Resources team responsible for processing applications in a timely manner.

Q: How did this tool come together?

A: This tool, and its functionality, came about from industry feedback – customers and contractors who asked for a simpler, consistent applications process – and from employees at Hawaiian Electric who are responsible for reviewing the applications.

Q: What are the benefits of using this tool compared to the previous process?

A: The online tool streamlines the overall application process by allowing for convenient electronic submission of information and documents. Applicants are prompted to provide required documentation, reducing the potential of delay associated with simple errors of omission. It is not uncommon for applicants to overlook certain information required to process the application. Applicants (both customers and contractors) also have greater visibility into the overall process with regular access to log-in and see the current status of the application.



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Account Management

Q: If I change my company email address in the system, will it update all of my existing applications?

A: No. You'll need to update each existing application with your new email address. We are looking to add this functionality (to update previous records) in a future release.

Q: Can I have emails sent to two company addresses? (I.e. a group email account and a personal account?)

A: No. The system only supports one email address for all electronic communication.

Q: Are we limited to a certain number of users for contractor accounts?

A: No. Not at this time.

Application

Q: As a customer, will I receive a summary of the application?

A: Yes. Customers will also receive a copy of the completed, signed agreement.

Q: As a contractor, will I receive a copy of the completed, signed agreement?

A: No. This is only sent to signing parties that are part of the contract with us.

Q: I'm a contractor filling out the application on behalf of the customer. Will the customer be able to see the application that I've submitted?

A: Yes, the customer will receive a summary of the application. The customer also has the ability to access the tool throughout the application process to check on its status, if they set up an online account prior to the application being submitted.

Q: The property in question has more than one owner. How do multiple property owners sign an agreement using this tool?

A: Currently, the system only allows for one property owner to be on the agreement. It is not necessary for the other property owners to sign the agreement; however, we do require the applicant to provide a proof of signature authority if the property is held by anyone other than individual (i.e. company, church, school, trust, etc.) This provides assurance that the person submitting the application is truly acting on behalf of the owner/s.

Q: Does the homeowners' association have access to this process?

A: Unless the homeowners' association owns the property, no. The property owner is responsible for remaining compliant with homeowners' association requirements.

Q: Is there a fee for submitting an application?

A: We are evaluating a fee structure, but do not have one in place at this time.

Q: Is there a limit on the size of files that are uploaded into the tool?

A: Yes. The tool can accept individual files up to 7 MB each.

Q: Is there a field available to add a project code in order to correlate with our (contractor company) internal paperwork?

A: At this time, no. We will consider adding it to future versions if there is enough user support for doing so.

Q: How do customers submit a change of contractor request through the tool?

A: Please contact your local DER office for assistance.

Q: Does the tool support adding multiple PV panels or multiple inverters that are different sizes?

A: Yes, click on the corresponding button in the tool to add inverters and/or panels to fill in the information for different make or models of equipment.

Building Permit

Q: At what point in the process are County building inspections required?

A: County building inspections are required when projects are submitted for validation.

Calculations

Q: Does the tool automatically calculate system size and other components?

A: Yes, it calculates the system size based on four design guidelines.

Communications

Q: What information can I expect to receive throughout the process?

A: We will send notifications with information regarding issues, progress and next steps as those milestones are reached within the process.

Change Management

Q: How much training will you provide to us (contractors) so that we can be proficient as soon as possible?

A: We will be hosting an initial training for at least one member of your staff shortly before we “go-live” with the tool. Future training events will be announced in advance after the tool is available. The overall application process is unchanged and you still need to provide all of the same information. However, you will now have the ability to complete and upload the information electronically instead of submitting paper.

Email / No Email

Q: Does the tool validate that the email is accurate?

A: Email verification is included in the registration process, but not the application process. Please make sure the email is accurate to avoid delays in receiving important information to complete the application.

Q: In the application process, does the email have to belong to the property owner?

A: The email should belong to the owner or the owner’s designated representative. The owner will need to use this email address in order to provide the encrypted signature for the application.

Q: I’m a customer who doesn’t have an email. How can I submit an application?

A: We are no longer accepting paper applications for CSS after the tool goes online; however, we will continue to make reasonable accommodation for those who request it. Please discuss this with the contractor or call us for assistance.

Q: If the customer doesn't want to provide an email address or doesn't have one, how will they complete the necessary steps in the process?

A: Without an email, the time needed to complete the necessary steps will be longer. Customers will need to use the standard postal service to receive and submit the necessary paperwork, which may result in delays.

eSignature

Q: How does the electronic signature work with DocuSign? Can it be done on a tablet while contractors are working with customers?

A: Only customers and/or designated representatives are required to submit an electronic signature through DocuSign. The link to electronically sign will be sent separately to their personal email on file and must be done through DocuSign's proprietary encryption software; therefore, the option is not available to contractors for use on their systems.

Q: What if my customer is unable to use eSignature. Can he/she still provide a "wet" signature instead?

A: Yes. The customer can download, print and sign the generated agreement. It can be scanned and emailed back to us or sent through via the postal service. If it is scanned, please make sure all pages are included and legible.

Processing

Q: Once the signed application is submitted, how long will the utility take to finish its completeness review?

A: We have 15 business days, as prescribed in the tariff, to finish completeness review.

Q: Why am I unable to submit changes to the application or make any corrections that were requested?

A: Once an application is submitted, it goes through the Completeness Review and Technical Review processes. To expedite these reviews, please hold off on submitting any changes until after your application has been granted Conditional Approval.

IIQ

Q: How does this tool interact with the IIQ system? Will there be any changes to IIQ as a result of going live with the Customer Interconnection Tool?

A: No, the IIQ system will continue to be available after the CIT launches and will include the status of all applications in the queue regardless of how they were submitted.

Integration

Q: Can a “right sized” system based on the customer’s historical usage be included into the application process?

A: WattPlan is still available and recommended to be used prior to designing your system. An automated “right sized” calculation tool will be considered in a future release.

Inverter Compliance

Q: Who needs to sign the inverter section?

A: It can be signed by either the contractor or the customer.

Q: If I select a qualified inverter from the dropdown provided, will I still need to submit proof of compliance?

A: Yes. All systems require verification that inverter settings are compliant with current requirements and should be submitted with project validation.

Meter / Meter Number

Q: Customers are always typically notified when meters are changed out. Will the contractor be notified when the meter is changed?

A: Yes. Contractors will receive the Permission to Operate (PTO) notification via email once the new meter has been installed.

Q: Sometimes the meter number doesn't correspond to the correct address, what do I do if that happens to me while filling out the application?

A: It's true that meter numbers sometimes don't correspond to the correct address in our system. The CIT will produce an error message if the meter number doesn't correspond to the physical address, which doesn't allow you to submit an application. If that happens, the customer of record (the person whose name is on the account) must contact Customer Service to make the necessary correction in our system.

Q: My project is New Construction with a temporary meter. Will the system accept the use of a temporary meter?

A: Yes, a temporary meter number will work the same as an ordinary meter number for the purpose using this tool.

Modifications to Executed Applications

Q: Can I use the tool to add storage or make other modifications to an existing system that was executed using the previous process?

A: No. Any changes or modifications to an application and/or system must remain in the same "channel" where it began. So if you or your customer submitted an application through the previous process – it must continue to use that process through completion.

Q: How do I submit revisions or modifications to an application submitted after the launch of CIT?

A: Revisions can be submitted through the tool and will be reviewed. If you are notified that anything is missing or incorrect, the correction along with the entire revision must be resubmitted. An email will be sent once approved. At this time, the tool doesn't support revisions or modifications that increase the total system size.

Other Programs

Q: Currently the CIT only supports CSS. Will it be expanded to support other interconnection processes?

A: Potentially. We will evaluate those opportunities in the future.

Paper Applications

Q: What happens to previously submitted applications? Will they be migrated into this tool?

A: No. Previously submitted applications will continue to go through that process and will not be migrated to the online tool.

Q: Are we required to use the CIT or do you still accept paper applications?

A: After the tool becomes available, we will no longer accept paper applications for CSS applications as a general rule. However, we will make reasonable accommodations for those who are unable to use email.

Process

Q: Does this tool change any of the processes currently in place for submitting applications?

A: No. It does not change the process. It only changes how you submit information to begin each phase of the process. All of the existing requirements and the prescribed time frames to complete those requirements are unchanged.

Q: Since the tool requires most fields to be completed before the application may be submitted, how does this impact the completeness review? Why does it even need to go through that process any longer?

A: We still need to review the application to verify its accuracy and completeness. Among the items that we look for are errors and/or discrepancies in names, county records, uploaded documents and drawings, input data, etc.

Q: What if I don't agree with the pre-populated data of the equipment? How do I resolve my concern?

A: Please call us to assist you, and we will provide options for you to proceed.

Q: Are there any changes in the criteria for passing the technical reviews?

A: No, the criteria are unchanged in Rule 14H and the CIT is compliant with all associated rules (14H, 22 and 23).

Project Validation

Q: I have a project that is nearing validation that was initiated through the original process, prior to the launch of CIT. Can I use the tool to submit the validation for that project?

A: No. The tool only accepts validation for projects that were submitted after the tool became available. Projects that were submitted prior to the launch of CIT must go through the same process throughout the remaining steps to completion.

Revision

Q: Once an application is submitted, when can I do any revisions?

A: Once an application has been formally submitted, no further revisions are allowed until conditional approval is received. However, if we notice that something is missing during the completeness review, we will let you know and re-open the application in order for you to provide the requested information.

Status

Q: As a customer, how can I check on the progress of my application?

A: Customers are always welcome to call customer service, but the online tool allows them to quickly and easily check on the status of their application at their convenience.

Q: What is meant by the term “IIQ Status PI”?

A: It's good news. It means that you have received conditional approval of your system pending installation (and the remaining steps in the process).



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