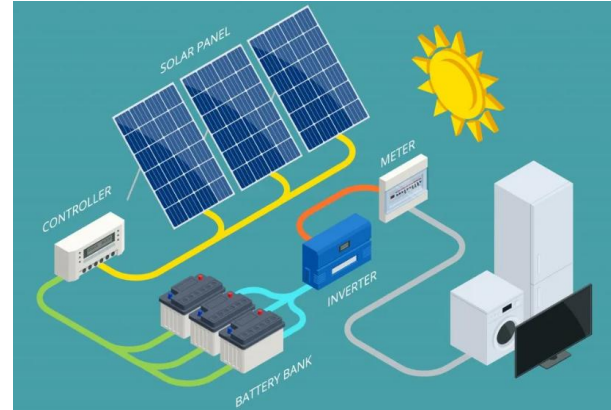


# SOLAR ENERGY FAQ GUIDE

Are you a business owner considering using solar energy to power your business?

This guide answers general FAQs about solar energy specifically for small business owners. While these answers cover common questions and considerations, we recommend reaching out to local installers for site-specific assessments and detailed information about available incentives.



## What is solar energy?

Solar energy is energy that is captured and converted into electricity using photovoltaic (PV) panels or into heat using solar thermal systems. It is a clean, renewable source of power.

## How do solar panels work?

Solar panels are made of photovoltaic cells that convert sunlight directly into electricity. When sunlight hits the cells, electrons move and create an electric current, which is then converted into usable electricity for your home or business.

## Are there incentives for installing solar in BC?

Yes, homeowners and businesses can benefit from:

- Federal Greener Homes Loan (up to \$40,000 interest-free)
- BC Hydro Rebates (up to \$20,000 on eligible solar and battery storage)
- Business tax incentives (accelerated capital cost allowance)

## Can solar power work in British Columbia's climate?

Yes! Even though BC experiences cloudy and rainy weather, solar panels can still generate electricity from diffused sunlight. In fact, Germany, which has similar weather to coastal BC, is a global leader in solar adoption.

## How much do solar panels cost in Canada?

The average cost ranges from \$2.50–\$3.50 per watt installed. For a typical 7 kW home system, costs are approximately \$17,500–\$24,500 before incentives. Costs vary by location, installer, and system size.

## What is self generation?

Self Generation (formerly Net metering) allows you to send excess solar electricity back to the grid and receive credits on your BC Hydro bill. Credits can be used to offset electricity you draw from the grid when your system is not producing enough (like at night or in winter).

**What is the payback period for solar in BC?**

Depending on system size, electricity rates, and incentives, the average payback period is 10–15 years. With panels lasting 25–30 years, this allows for many years of free electricity.

**How long do solar panels last?**

Most panels last 25–30 years and typically come with a performance warranty. After this period, panels often continue to generate electricity but at reduced efficiency.

**Can a business lease solar panels?**

Yes. Some solar providers in Canada offer leasing or power purchase agreements (PPAs), where businesses pay a monthly fee or a per-kilowatt-hour rate instead of purchasing the system outright. This lowers upfront costs and makes solar more accessible, though long-term savings are often higher with system ownership.

**Do solar panels add value to a property?**

Yes. Studies in Canada and the U.S. suggest that homes with solar installations often sell faster and at a premium compared to similar homes without solar. Buyers are attracted to the long-term savings on electricity bills.

**Can installing solar improve a business's brand image?**

Absolutely. Consumers increasingly prefer companies that demonstrate sustainability. Installing solar can boost your brand's environmental credibility, help meet ESG goals, and attract eco-conscious customers.

**How much maintenance do solar panels need?**

Solar panels are low-maintenance. Occasional cleaning to remove dirt, dust, or snow can help efficiency. Professional inspections every few years ensure the system is working optimally.

**Can I install solar panels myself?**

While DIY is possible, professional installation is recommended to ensure safety, compliance with building codes, eligibility for incentives, and proper grid connection.

**How do batteries work with solar systems?**

Adding a battery allows you to store excess electricity for use during the night, peak demand times, or power outages. While batteries increase upfront costs, they improve energy independence and resilience.

**What happens to solar panels at the end of their life?**

Panels can be recycled. Glass, metals, and other materials are reclaimed. Canada is working toward stronger recycling infrastructure to support end-of-life solar equipment.

**Can I measure my solar potential myself?**

Yes. You can estimate your solar potential using online tools such as [PVWatts](#) and [OpenSolar](#), which consider factors like location, roof orientation, shading, and local weather pattern