


TOP 9 THINGS TO ASK A SOLAR CONTRACTOR BEFORE YOU SIGN A CONTRACT



Clean Energy Solutions

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Each year, tens of thousands of Americans decide to go solar. However, installing solar panels atop your home isn't something you should do on a whim. There are lots of things you'll want to consider before you sign on the dotted line.

Below are the top 9 things you'll want to ask your solar contractor before you decide to commit.

1 WHAT IS NET METERING? HOW WILL NET METERING BENEFIT ME IF I DECIDE TO MOVE FORWARD?

Lots of solar customers put more energy into the grid than their home needs. For example, if your solar panels produce an average of 10 kilowatt hours of energy each day, but your home only uses 7 KW hours, you have a 3 KW hour surplus that goes into the grid. In this respect, you can think of the power grid as a battery that you're constantly charging.

If there are times when your energy use exceeds what your solar system produces, the extra energy you put in will be credited back to you. This is the crux of what net metering is. Not only do you get to use the excess energy you put into the grid during times of high use (i.e., in the summer when you're cranking your AC), you also have access to it when your system isn't producing energy, such as when it's cloudy, raining, and/or at night.

Also worth mentioning, is that unused energy hour credits stay on your account- which means you'll always have access to what you've banked when you need it.

Net Metering Definition from the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA)

Net metering is a billing mechanism that credits solar energy system owners for the electricity they add to the grid. For example, if a residential customer has a PV system on their roof, it may generate more electricity than the home uses during daylight hours. If the home is net-metered, the electricity meter will run backwards to provide a credit against what electricity is consumed at night or other periods when the home's electricity use

exceeds the system's output. Customers are only billed for their "net" energy use. On average, only 20-40% of a solar energy system's output ever goes into the grid, and this exported solar electricity serves nearby customers' loads.

2 WHAT IS THE SOLAR INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT (ITC), AND WILL I BENEFIT FROM IT?

The solar Investment Tax Credit was enacted in 2006 and as of the 2022 tax year, it provides homeowners with a 30% tax credit for installing solar systems on residential property, and it allows homeowners to apply the credit to their personal income taxes. The ITC provides homeowners with a dollar-for-dollar reduction on their income tax liability.

*According to SEIA, the solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC) is one of the most important federal policy mechanisms to support the growth of solar energy in the United States. The residential and commercial solar ITC has **helped the U.S. solar industry grow by a factor of more than 200x** since it was implemented in 2006, with an average annual growth of 33% over the last decade alone.*

3 DOES FLORIDA HAVE ITS OWN INCENTIVE PROGRAMS?

Although Florida does not offer a statewide incentive program, homeowners are exempt from paying sales tax on solar panels. Additionally, the state also provides a [100% property tax exemption](#) for residential renewable energy properties.

4 WHAT IS A SOLAR WARRANTY? WHAT DOES IT COVER?

If you're working with a licensed, reputable solar contractor, you'll receive an extended warranty. In most cases, companies offer a 25-30-year extended warranty. Panels tend to have a 25 or 30-year warranty, which guarantees that power production will remain somewhere in the range of 85 to 92% of what they produced on the first day you installed them. GT Clean Energy Solutions also offers multiple brands of Tier One rated panels that all Miami-Dade Hurricane Wind-certified.

You'll also receive a warranty on the inverter- which is the mechanism that transforms sun energy into usable, alternating current energy (which is the type of energy that's used to power your lights and appliances.) Most inverter warranties span from 12 to 25 years. For more information about the specific warranties that are associated with the system you're thinking about buying, be sure to ask your solar contractor.

5 IS SOLAR A GOOD INVESTMENT FOR FLORIDA RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES?

The initial, up-front costs to install solar can be costly, however, in most cases, the payback period for Florida homeowners is approximately 10 years. After that, the money you save on your utility bills can go straight to your bank account. For example, [EnergySage](#) estimates that as of January 2021, the average Naples FL electricity user spends \$225 a month on energy costs. This adds up to approximately \$2,700 in savings each year – and that's before you factor in the cost of inflation.

Lee County Electric Cooperative and Florida Power & Light have already announced rate hikes in 2023, as well as many electric providers in the U.S.

Solar panels are also low-maintenance, and they don't require a ton of upkeep.

6 IS MY HOME A GOOD FIT FOR SOLAR PANELS?

This is a great question to ask because not all homes are eligible for solar systems. For example, if you live in a wooded area, your house is well shaded by trees, and you don't get a lot of sun, you're likely not a great candidate for solar. Why? Because in the absence of sun exposure, you won't get much solar energy production. On the other hand, if your home does get a lot of direct sunlight, then yes, your home may be a good fit for solar.

Lastly, you'll also want to consider the structural integrity of the top of your home. If the rafters beneath your roof aren't built to code for this type of system, or your roofing materials wouldn't support the weight of solar panels, a solar install may not be right for you. If you have questions about whether solar is a good fit for your house, townhouse or condo, call our office today to schedule a free no-cost evaluation.

7 IS SOLAR AFFORDABLE? I'M WORRIED I CAN'T AFFORD IT

Solar is a lot more affordable than you think, and in fact, it's the least-costly option when it comes to buying power for your home. Regardless as to whether you're interested in 0% down, 5% down, or 30% down, you'll have numerous financing options to choose from. In some instances, the loan payments may be less than what you're currently paying for electricity. As long as your credit is good, you should be able to take advantage of 100% financing.

If your credit isn't strong enough to get a loan, you can also explore lease options. Although you won't be able to take advantage of the federal tax credit, your lease payment may still be less than what you're paying toward your utility bill.



8 WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF GOING SOLAR LIKE? WILL I HAVE TO DO A LOT OF GROUNDWORK TO GET THE PROCESS STARTED?

Getting started is a lot easier than you might think, and in fact, the only thing you need to do is review and sign the proposal. Once that's done, a project manager will do the heavy lifting.

They'll arrange for your home (and roof) to be surveyed by a technician, they'll evaluate your electricity service panel (to make sure everything will work correctly), and they'll circle back with our engineers. The engineers will pull the requirement permits from the city, and once those are approved, we'll contact you to schedule the install.

The time it takes to pull the required permits can vary widely based on the city you live in. For example, whereas in some cases, permits can be pulled the same

day, in other instances, this process may take 30 days or more. Most installations can be scheduled within 7-10 days of permitting, and the install itself often takes less than a day.

9 DO I NEED TO BUY A BATTERY AS PART OF THE SYSTEM?

There's no set answer to this question, and the best response we have is "maybe." It all depends on what you want, and whether buying a battery will add value to what you've purchased. For example, batteries are a great option for homeowners who want to ensure they'll still have power if the grid goes down. If the area gets hit by a large storm (or hurricane), and the area's power goes out, a battery can help keep your appliances and your lights on.

For more information about whether a battery is right for you, be sure to ask your solar consultant for more information.

Are you thinking about going solar and you'd like more information? We can help.

For more information about the associated costs, installation timelines, and how going solar can save you money, just fill out the **FREE ESTIMATE FORM** on our website here: [GTCleanEnergySolutions.com/FREE Estimate](https://GTCleanEnergySolutions.com/FREE%20Estimate) or simply call **(412) 512-9737** to get started!



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