



Solar FAQ's

Residential and Commercial Solar Energy Systems

1. How does solar power generation compare with, say, wind power systems?

Solar power has seen a much higher neighbourhood approval rating than wind power project. In southern Ontario, solar panels generate electricity on many more sunny and hazy days during the year than the intermittent generation of wind power. Solar is noise-free, has no moving parts to wear out, and only requires a minimal annual maintenance cleaning and inspection program.

2. What is the difference between an on-grid and off-grid solar system?

An on-grid solar system is connected to the local utility power grid. Under an Ontario microFIT contract, all of the solar electricity generated is fed directly into the power grid. There is no battery storage in this configuration.

An off-grid system is independent of the power grid and stores unused power in special storage batteries for later use at night or rainy/snowy days. An off-grid system would, of course, not be affected by temporary power outages in the utility power grid.

3. Do I need to reshingle, or reinforce, the roof before a solar system is installed?

While the solar array offers some protection for your existing roofing systems, we are seeing more very hot summer days over 40°C in Ontario. This can prematurely bake your existing roofing so it's a good investment to update your roofing system before your solar system is installed, especially if it hasn't been done in the last few years. Otherwise, your complete solar array and racking will have to be dismantled, and then reinstalled, to repair the roof in the future.

A Structural Engineer has to come out and

evaluate your internal roof structure to ensure it can support the proposed solar system. His recommendations would be important criteria to receive a municipal building permit for your solar system.

4. Can I install the solar equipment myself?

No, much like certified electricians, building code requires that solar equipment design and installation be done by solar integration professionals and certified installers.

5. What is required to do an onsite solar evaluation of our home?

We would come out and inspect your home or building to evaluate sun orientation, seasonal shade patterns, roofing and structural integrity, and local grid connection capacity. We can match your solar system design to comfortably fit your roof capacity and sun exposure. Then we work out a financial projection and system quotation based on your building's solar generation capacity, your budget, and financing options.

6. How long does it take to have a microFIT solar system installed and connected to the power grid?

Once the solar system is designed and approved, the microFIT application, connection approvals and installation can be about 4-6 months, depending on property location, installation schedules and local utility connection capacities. However, there are no guarantees and timeframes may vary as each approval agency is working through a significant backlog as of the beginning of 2011. Power of the Sun2 Solar will follow a detailed breakdown to help you through each step from solar evaluation to power grid connection.

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7. Won't the snow build-up on the solar panels in the winter?

Rain and snow help clean the solar panels. Because the solar panels are mounted at an angle to face the sun, the dark solar modules create a thin film of water so most snow usually slides off on its own. In areas with persistently higher lake effect snow storms, solar systems may require brushing off occasionally. This service can also be included in your solar maintenance package.

8. What happens to my on-grid solar system in a temporary power blackout?

Unfortunately you will lose power just as you would before having the solar system installed.

9. Will installing a solar system under the microFIT program mean my home will become energy-self sufficient and eliminate my monthly hydro bills?

No, under the microFIT program the solar system is operated as a parallel electrical system with a second electric meter to measure your solar electricity generation before it is transferred to the utility power grid. So the local power grid will continue to supply your existing home electrical system and you will still receive your monthly hydro bill for home usage. With your solar system, however, you will receive a regular payment from OPA through a separate account at your local utility for the solar electricity your system generates.

10. Under the microFIT contract, will I receive the same payment amount every month from the OPA?

Just as there are seasonal variations in regional

weather, there are variations in the amount of sunlight exposure your system will receive every month. There are also some panel efficiency variations when the temperatures range from -20°C in the winter to +40°C in summer. So rather than a set amount, it will likely fall into an upper and lower payment range over the year.

11. What happens to my microFIT contract if I want to sell my house?

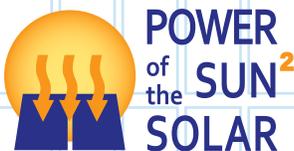
Having an additional solar income stream may be a useful sales advantage in tight real estate market. The value of your installed solar system is added to the appraised value of your home and would be included in the resale price of the home. Once sold, the microFIT contract can then be transferred to the new buyer for the remaining term of the original contract.

12. Does the 20 year warranty cover just the solar panels, or the complete solar system?

Manufacturer warranties vary on both component coverage and length of warranty so each component of the complete solar system has its own warranty coverage and product registration.

13. What kind of maintenance is required for a residential solar system?

Today's solar panels and systems are very reliable with typical warranties of 25 years and a service life greater than 35 years. The glass components of the panels are more efficient when they are clean, so a regular cleaning with a non-abrasive cleaner can improve system integrity and performance. A regular system inspection will also avoid potential problems and ensure compliance with manufacturer or installer warranties.



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