

Plug in: to installing batteries



Home batteries allow you to get even more out of your solar power system. This step-by-step guide outlines what to look out for, what questions to ask, and how to make the right choice for your home.

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Step one: Understanding if a solar battery is right for me.

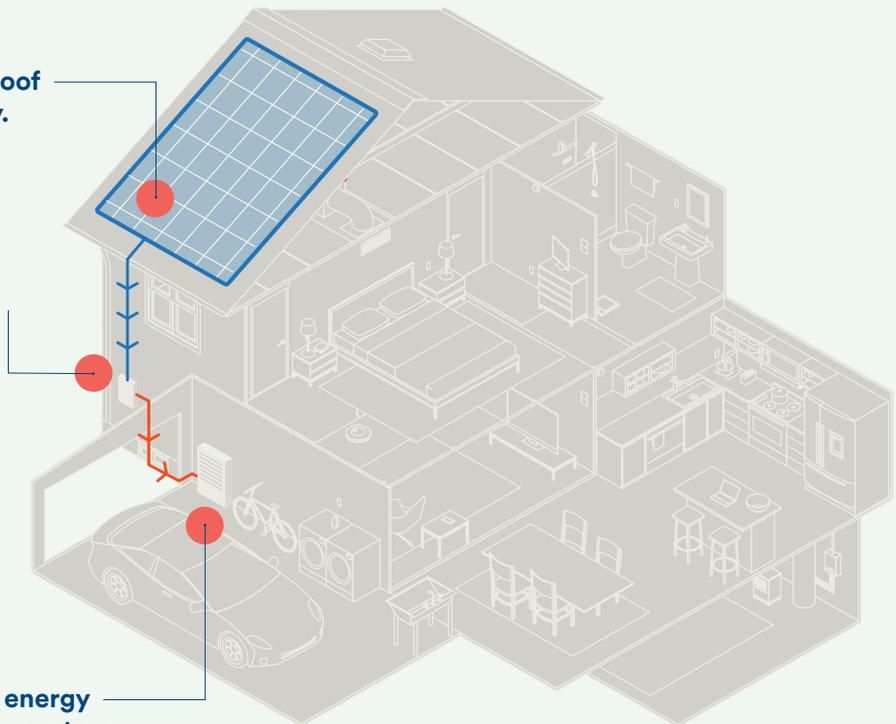
What is a home battery?

A home battery is just like a big version of a regular rechargeable battery. You can charge it up to store electricity, and then use it to power your home later. Battery systems are usually designed to save unused power from solar panels, but they can also be set up to charge from the electricity grid.

The solar panels on the roof turn sunlight into energy.

An inverter converts the energy into electricity for your home

A battery can store energy from the solar power system, for you to use later on.



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What are the benefits of batteries?



If you have solar panels, you can use a battery to save solar power you didn't need to use during the day (instead of exporting it to the grid) and use it at night when there's no sun to create energy.



Independence from providers: rely less on an energy provider by using more of your own electricity.



Power your house during a blackout: if your solar and battery system is set up to allow it, you can use your stored energy (and your solar panels) during an electricity outage.



Support the growth of new energy tech: as more people install batteries, the battery industry will grow, and prices may come down.

Are batteries right for me?

Q&A



Can I have a battery installed?

If you own your home and have a suitable place to install a battery, yes – unless it's limited by a heritage overlay, Owner's Corporation rules, or local network requirements. If you rent, it's up to your landlord.

Will the battery work with my solar power system?

Different types of batteries work with different types of systems. A good provider will work out what the requirements are for your system and offer a battery that suits it.

Will the battery save me money?

Reducing your energy bills with a battery may not save you money if the battery costs more than your bill savings. A good battery retailer will help you work out if you'll make savings.



For more information on how to work out the benefits of a battery system, check out the [Clean Energy Council's guide to installing a household battery storage system](#).

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Step 2: Choosing a battery retailer

As the market for batteries has grown, so has the number of retailers to choose from. The best ways to find a good solar retailer are:



Ask people you know about good experiences they've had with solar retailers.



Use recommendation services, like [SolarQuotes](#) or [Solar Choice](#), which list retailers that have good customer recommendations.



Look for local retailers that are members of a best practice industry scheme, such as the Approved Solar Retailer scheme run by the Clean Energy Council. Some state government solar rebate programs will require you to use one of these retailers.

Once you have found a few battery retailers you like, you can compare their quotes to find the offer that best suits your needs.

What should I look out for in my quote?

In your quote, a good retailer must give clear information about:

- The brand, cost, and warranty of the battery. The warranty might be for a number of years, number of cycles (fully charging and then fully using the battery), or energy throughput (how much electricity in total the battery will provide over its life). A good battery warranty should be 10 years, at least 6,000 cycles, or enough energy throughput to give 6,000 cycles.
- The power rating, measured in kW (kilowatts). This is how much electricity the battery can provide at any one time. For example, a 6kW battery could power a hairdryer and a kettle at the same time, but a 3kW battery could only power one or the other.
- The usable storage capacity, measured in kWh (kilowatt hours). This is how much electricity the battery can provide in total until it runs out. For example, an 8kWh battery could power an electric heater continuously for four hours while a 4kWh battery could only power it for two hours. Batteries usually also have a higher 'nominal' storage capacity, but the usable capacity is what's important.



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- The performance of the battery at the end of the warranty period. Battery performance worsens as it ages. Look for one that performs at least 70% of its rated output at the end of the warranty period.
- An estimate of the financial benefits it will bring you. A good battery retailer must work this out based on the battery's expected performance and your energy usage. If you are getting a battery and solar together, ask to see the financial benefit of the solar both with and without the battery so you can see what difference the battery makes.
- Where the battery will be installed in your home.
- Whether the battery requires other components (such as an inverter or battery management system) to operate, or whether they are built-in.
- Whether the battery includes a monitoring system with an app to show how it's performing.

Questions to ask retailers when quoting:

- Are there any issues with my property that will affect the cost of installation?
- How long will installation take?
- Am I eligible for any rebates or subsidies? If so, how much will they reduce the cost of the battery by? How do I access these rebates?
- How will the battery affect the energy bill savings from my solar?
- What is the warranty?
- Will my battery provide electricity during a power outage? If so, for how long?

Signing the contract and paying for your solar power system.

Once you have reviewed some quotes and found the best retailer for you, you will be asked to sign a purchase contract.

A good retailer must:

- Give you a contract that is clearly written and not full of technical language.
- Explain the contract to you and point out any specifics you should be aware of.
- Detail the payment process and what happens if the contract needs to be ended. For example, whether your entire deposit will be refunded or only part of it.
- Explain what happens on the rare occasion that an issue is discovered on installation (this should also be detailed in your contract).



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After you have signed your contract, there will be a few options for paying for your battery system. You should check what option best suits your financial situation.



You could pay up-front.



Your state government might offer low or no-interest loans for solar power.



You might redraw on your mortgage.



The battery retailer may offer finance so you pay in installments.



Before accepting finance (i.e. paying in installments) from your battery retailer, ask:

- Is the total cost different if I accept financing?
- How much is the interest?
- Are there any additional fees?
- Are there any payment terms or conditions that you must meet?
- Are there any additional fees you'll be charged if you fail to meet terms and conditions?
- Will this affect my credit rating?
- What happens if I have trouble making a payment?

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Step 3: Getting your battery installed.

Your installer will have nominated a day for installation to start and let you know if there are any changes to the date or timeframe.

For installation, your battery retailer will:

- Arrange for safe delivery and installation at your property.
- Inform you of any inconveniences such as blocking driveways or having to turn your electricity off during part of the installation.
- Tell you about any problems that occur and what it will cost to fix them.
- Give you clear instructions for how to use your system, and information sheets or manuals for the components, (make sure you keep this component information somewhere safe because you will need it if you have a warranty claim).
- Clean up when they are done.
- Advise you of the installer's name and details.

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On rare occasion, an installer will find a significant issue on site that prevents installation. In these situations they should offer to terminate the contract and refund you some or all of your deposit. Once your battery is installed, the installer will test and 'commission' (activate) it. This may involve registering it with your energy network or the energy system operator. A good installer will tell you of any requirements like this and if you need to do anything.

How do I start using my battery system?

Once it's all up and running, your new battery will be storing your spare solar electricity for later usage, letting you use more of your solar power.

A good retailer must:



- Give you clear information about how to safely use, maintain and get the most out of your battery.
- Show you how to use information from your battery's display or monitoring app (if you have one) to find out:
 - How much electricity it is storing.
 - How much you are using and when.

Finding, purchasing, and installing a battery in your home can be straightforward and successful. Use this as your step-by-step guide.

Already using a battery? Check out our guide 'Plug in: to using batteries' to find out about your rights, consumer protections and how to get the most out of it.

