

## Questions to Ask When Considering Installing Batteries with Your Solar System

*The rooftop solar undertaking is more complicated if a battery system is included. There are additional questions to ask.*

### Questions to ask the solar provider/salesman:

- How much battery, in kilowatt-hours, is the company recommending?
- Is the battery system intended only to store day-time generated power for use at night? Or, is it also intended to work as a backup system during electrical outages?
- Will the batteries still have reserve power for an electrical outage if they are working to supply my home with power after dark?
- What is the cost per kilowatt-hour and the total cost of the battery system? (This includes the batteries, the battery control system, and possibly a critical-loads service panel that will need to be installed for a battery backup system.)
- Where will the batteries be installed?
- How much of the home's electric usage will be supplied by the batteries?
- Will the batteries charge only off of the solar or will they also charge off of the electric grid?
- How do the various charging methods affect my electric bill?
- How will the batteries affect the anticipated savings per month or annually on the electric bill?
- How will the batteries affect the anticipated payback period?

- How will the batteries affect the anticipated finance period?
- How will the batteries affect the anticipated savings after I finally break even?
- Has the salesman calculated the battery storage capacity effectively to really reduce my costs or usage off of the system, or are they simply suggesting a standard system? (If the battery system is sized small to keep the cost down, it will be ineffective in its task and it will still add significant cost to the solar system.)
- What is the warranty period for the battery system? How will damage be reported, repairs be made, and costs paid?
- When will the batteries have to be replaced?
- Will there be any maintenance costs associated with the battery system in the next 25 years, or possibly even within the time period they think it will take to break even?
- Will I be able to tell when the battery system stops working?
- Will I be able to tell if the battery system is having the right impact on my electric bill?



### Questions to ask the electric utility:

- What steps must be taken to get approved for a battery installation and possible critical-loads panel?
- Does the utility offer any installation incentives, rebates or credits?
- Can the utility provide me any information concerning how the operation of the battery system will affect my electric usage and my bill?
- Does the utility have any statistical data on existing solar+battery customers and how batteries affect the electric bill?
- Will I be able to tell if the battery system is having the right impact on my electric bill?

### Questions to ask yourself:

- Do I realize that I will still be connected to the utility's electric grid, even with a battery backup, and will still be making monthly payments to the utility? [It is important to remain connected to the grid for 3 reasons: 1) the batteries will run low during the night, 2) the grid will provide power if the solar + battery system fails, 3) the solar system may not be able to provide all of the house power needs even with battery storage.]
- Will the battery system still be working at the end of the payback period or loan period?
- What technology will be coming in the next 10 years, or even 5 years, that would eclipse this one?
- Will I be able to tell when the battery system stops working?
- Will I be able to tell if the battery system is having the right impact on my electric bill?