



8 Questions to Consider Before Installing Rooftop Solar



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“Free energy from the sun *and* lower electric bills... Where do I sign up?”

The benefits of installing rooftop solar panels may seem like a no-brainer, but the reality is, not every home (and homeowner’s situation) is always right for solar.

There are several factors to consider before pulling the trigger on a rooftop solar system, like determining if your home will receive enough sun to achieve your goals, finding the right contractor, negotiating contracts and other important details.

Investing in solar for your home is a major decision. If you’re considering rooftop solar, CNMEC can help.

Here are eight questions to consider before installing rooftop solar panels.

1. **What are my goals?** If your primary goal is to save money on electric bills, you may be able to achieve this through our free energy audit program, which can identify areas of the home for maximum energy savings. If your main goal is to use renewable energy and help the environment, consider signing up for our Green Power program. You can help power renewable energy, without having to invest and maintain a home system.
2. **Is my roof suitable for solar?** Your roof should be in good condition before installing solar panels. If your roof is old and in poor shape, it may need to be replaced before panels can be mounted. Additionally, your roof should receive *a lot* of sun to make the most of a rooftop system. Consider how much sun (and shade) the roof receives and if any trees will need to be removed. Solar panels perform best when facing south, so keep this in mind as you think about where the panels will be mounted.
3. **How long will I own the home?** If you’re considering rooftop solar, you’re likely planning to stay in the home for several years. But if you plan to sell the home at some point down the road, consider that not all potential buyers will want to maintain a rooftop solar system. If you enter into a contract to lease the system, carefully review the terms and what those mean if you decide to sell the property.
4. **Lease or purchase?** Purchasing a rooftop solar system outright is expensive, which is why many homeowners opt to lease their solar panels. However, federal tax credits can help cover some of the costs for a new system, up to 30%. Regardless of how you decide to finance the solar system, make sure you get several quotes from qualified contractors.

Speaking of contractors, there are several factors you’ll want to discuss with them upfront.

5. **Can the contractor provide up-to-date documentation?** It may seem obvious but be sure to request proof and documentation of the contractor’s licensing, permitting and other credentials. Comb through company reviews, check the contractor’s status with Better Business Bureau, etc. Do your homework on the front end before signing a contract.
6. **Does the contract seem reasonable and fair?** If you decide to hire a contractor to install rooftop solar, carefully read the fine print of the contract. Do the system performance calculations seem realistic? Does the project time-frame sound reasonable? Negotiate the contract terms to fit your goals and needs.

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7. **Who will maintain the solar panels?** Determining who is responsible for maintaining the solar panels will depend on who owns the system. If you lease the system from a solar installer, it may be their responsibility. Periodically, solar panels need to be cleaned as dirt and debris can impact panel productivity. Parts may also need to be replaced, so it's important to know who will take on these responsibilities.
8. **How will I work with CNMEC?** Finally, but equally important, you should contact CNMEC if you decide to install solar. The system must be connected to the electric grid, so you'll need to sign an interconnection agreement. We can walk you through the steps, including how our solar rates and fees work. Our energy professionals can give you a general overview of how you can work with us on connecting your new rooftop solar system.

For many homeowners, solar panels are a great way to help the environment and save on electric bills, but there are many factors to consider before diving in and installing a system.

As with any major home project, do plenty of research upfront, and contact CNMEC if you have questions or decide to move forward with installation.

We're your local energy partner and can serve as a helpful resource throughout the process.

For engineering and technical information;
Clint Pierce (505) 847-1026 clint.pierce@cnmec.org

For rates and billing information;
Sylvia Padilla (505) 847-1115 sylvia.padilla@cnmec.org or
Alice Hennessy (505) 847-1009 alice.hennessy@cnmec.org

For rates and incentives;
Curtis Belcher (505) 847-1008 curtis.belcher@cnmec.org



“Ready, Set, Register”

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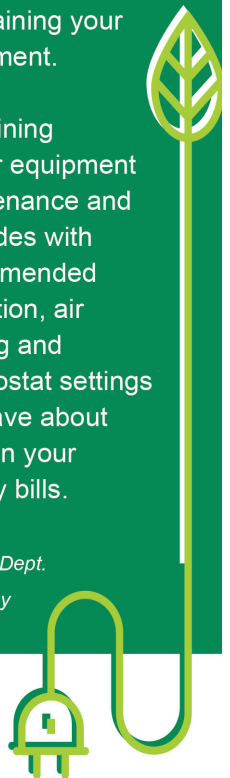
For more information on how you can participate, visit [vote.coop](https://www.vote.coop) to learn more about NVRD and check your voter registration! [#CoopsVote](https://www.vote.coop)

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a tune-up for your heating system? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment.

Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills.

Source: Dept.
of Energy



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