

Solar FAQs

Information for Victorian energy customers

→ *Photo Voltaic (PV) solar panels generate clean energy and may help reduce the cost of electricity bills for households. Once you've decided to install solar, there are some questions you may be asking about the process. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs).*

What is the approval and connection process?

1. Check if you are eligible for a Solar Homes package rebate on the [Solar Victoria website](#).
2. Apply for pre-approval with your [electricity distributor](#). Installation can't start until approval is granted by your distributor.
3. Your electricity distributor will review your application for the solar system.
4. Once you receive approval, speak to your electricity retailer (the company that sends your bills) to find out how a solar system could affect your electricity bills. Read our [Solar feed-in tariffs fact sheet](#) for more information about tariffs for exporting solar energy to the grid. Please note that some distributors will no longer let you have a controlled load for hot water heating and/or slab heating.
5. Choose a [Clean Energy Council-approved solar installer](#) to install the system at your property.
6. Sign a contract for your solar system and book in an installation time.
7. After installation, your installer must submit paperwork. The **table below** summarises the requirements of each Victorian electricity distributor.
8. After the paperwork is processed, your electricity retailer will raise a service order to your electricity distributor to replace/alter your meter and reassign a network tariff. Please note that in order to receive a solar tariff, you must have a smart meter.
9. Your electricity distributor must complete the meter reconfiguration (you will be charged a fee for this work).
10. Your electricity distributor must reassign the network tariff to the solar feed-in tariff in order to record the amount of surplus solar generation that is returned to the grid.
11. Your electricity retailer will issue you a bill in line with your normal billing cycle. The bill will show your usage from the grid and any electricity your solar system has exported to the grid. This bill will generally include the fee for the solar meter. Note that your retail tariff may also change.

	Pre-approval required	Certificate of electrical safety	Electrical works request	Embedded generator (EG) form	Other forms
AusNet services	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Must complete online 'post installation form'
United Energy	Not required for residential systems up to 10kW per phase	Yes	Yes	No	Submit online 'Micro Embedded Generator Connection form' prior to commencement of works.
Jemena	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Provide retailer with 'Embedded Generation Application ID' (given at approval stage)
Citipower	Yes	Yes	No	No	Must submit online 'solar alteration request'
Powercor	Yes	Yes	No	No	Must submit online 'solar alteration request'

What can go wrong with the process?

As with any process, there can be issues at any stage. Common problems with the process include:

- The installation is not satisfactory
- There is a problem with the solar system you purchased
- Your installer fails to submit the appropriate paperwork or there is a delay in submitting it
- Your electricity distributor doesn't reconfigure the meter or there is a delay
- Your electricity retailer doesn't apply the correct network feed-in tariff
- Your bills include unexpected charges.

We can investigate some complaints about solar but some complaints need to be raised with Consumer Affairs Victoria. Read the *How can EWOV help?* section for more information.

Why did my neighbour get approved for a bigger system?

Your electricity distributor may limit the electricity you're allowed to export to the grid. Electricity infrastructure, including the 'poles and wires' of the network, needs to be carefully managed. Too much solar electricity entering the grid could result in unwanted effects to the grid voltage and damage to transformers.

The maximum size of your solar system is limited by your electricity distributor. You will generally be allowed 5 to 10 kW per phase. There is a limit on how much solar can be connected to the local transformer. If lots of households in your area have PV solar, you may be required to install a smaller system or be limited as to how much electricity you can export to the grid (or both). These considerations are offered on a 'first come, first served' basis.

Why am I getting less solar generation than my neighbours?

Once your solar system has been installed, you might want to compare your system's performance to a neighbour with a similar system. If your neighbour has a similar system that is facing the same direction but is performing better than yours, there could be several causes. Common causes of underperformance are:

Dirty panels – dust, grime, bird droppings or moss on your panels can reduce their effectiveness. Many panels will self-clean in the rain but may need periodic manual cleaning. Many companies offer panel-cleaning services.

Shading – trees, vines, antennas, power poles and other obstructions may reduce the effectiveness of your panels. Shade may happen only at certain times of the day or during some seasons. Compare the shading at your property to your neighbour's shading.

Overheating – inverters can overheat on hot summer days. Provide shade to the inverter where possible.

Maintenance – your solar system may need maintenance. Ensure that your solar system is inspected and maintained by qualified tradespeople according to the schedule provided by your installer.

If you've investigated all you can and you think there may be a fault with your system, ask your solar installer about the performance of your system.

How can EWOV help?

We CAN help with complaints about your energy companies. For example, we can help with issues relating to your electricity account, connection or metering.

We CAN'T investigate complaints about solar retailers and installation companies. Please contact Consumer Affairs Victoria on 1300 55 81 81 / consumer.vic.gov.au or the Clean Energy Council at cleanenergycouncil.org.au



Where can I find more information?

Victorian Government's solar website: energy.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy/solar-energy

Clean Energy Council website: cleanenergycouncil.org.au/consumers

Solar Victoria: solar.voc.gov.au

Consumer Affairs Victoria: consumer.vic.gov.au

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Online: ewov.com.au

Freecall: 1800 500 509

Email: ewovinfo@ewov.com.au

Post: GPO Box 469, Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Translating and Interpreting Service: 131 450

National Relay Service: 133 677



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