

FAQs

Home & Rooftop Solar Panels

How does rooftop solar save homeowners money?

Rooftop solar helps California homeowners to save on their electricity bills. This is done through multiple different processes including net metering, battery storage and solar tax credits.

- **Reduced electricity costs:** Powering your home with solar can save money on your electric bill. The average price for electricity in California in October 2023 was **\$258 per month** – around \$3,000 per year. With solar, energy bills were reduced by **\$1,700** saving homes and businesses around \$110 each month.
- **Solar tax credit:** Although California **does not offer** a statewide solar rebate program, those who install solar panels on their **residence** or **business** are provided a federal solar tax credit dependent on the year of installation. The federal government offers a 30% tax credit to install a solar system onto your home or business. California has **additional programs** like the Self-Generation Incentive Program and Single-Family Affordable Solar Homes that make installing solar more affordable. Additionally, there is no dollar or lifetime limit to the credit earned. You can claim your federal solar tax credit by following the instructions **here**.



What happens to excess energy produced by rooftop solar panels?

The excess energy can either be returned to the grid or stored in battery technology to be used at a later time—allowing consumers to save money and have access to an efficient, reliable power source.

- **Returning to the grid:** Provides a way for consumers of solar energy to sell back the electricity they aren't using back into the grid. This is called [net metering](#). Net metering is [offered](#) by the California government and allows homes and businesses to take advantage of additional compensation at the end of a 12-month billing period.
- **Battery storage:** Provides a [reliable, back-up](#) source of power in case of a grid outage, utility shut off, or extreme weather. Storage technology allows for [reduced utility rates](#) by allowing California homeowners to decide where they want their power to be sourced from.

Can solar panels keep my lights on in instances when other power sources go out?

If your home is equipped with solar battery storage, your power will not go out. Instead of returning excess solar production to the grid, battery storage allows [electricity to be stored](#) for later use. This excess electricity is pulled from the battery and can be used in instances where other power sources like coal and natural gas would be threatened: when the power goes out, during intensive weather conditions, or at night.

How can I find out how much electricity I can generate with solar energy?

Homeowners can use a tool by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory called [PVWatts](#) to estimate energy production and costs using any California address. By entering in your PV system information, you can see just how much you would save by switching to solar energy.

Can solar panels be installed without impacting the design of my home?

A graphical layer can be placed on solar panels to ensure the aesthetics of your home or business are not altered. Solar panels can blend into roofing or side paneling to create a [building-integrated](#) design allowing homes in California to retain their initial integrity.



Rooftop solar panels on homes in Palo Alto
Palo Alto, California | Photo captured in 2019
Source: Sundry Photography via iStock