

WAP Solar Frequently Asked Questions, August 2022

What are the benefits of installing solar panels on my roof?

With the size system typically installed through WAP (about 5.0 kilowatts or kW), you can expect savings on your electric bill of over \$800 per year (at today's electricity costs), for the lifetime of the system (at least 25 to 30 years). The renewable electricity your system produces also means your electric utility will produce less pollution and CO₂ through combustion of coal or natural gas in power plants.

Can I expect any maintenance costs for a solar system?

There should be no maintenance costs. All of the major components of the system (the panels themselves, the inverters that convert the system's DC power to home AC power, and the rack system that holds the panels) have lengthy warranty periods, typically 25 years.

Will my solar system have a warranty?

Yes! In addition to the warranties on the components (panels, inverter, and racking system), typically for 25 years, the panels will have a production warranty guaranteeing that the amount of electricity produced by the system doesn't decrease by more than a very modest amount over something like a 25-year period. Depending on the system bid, there will also be a workmanship warranty of up to 10 years.

What do I need to do to maintain a solar system?

There are no moving parts in a roof-mounted solar system, and no maintenance should be necessary. As part of the solar installation, you will be given access via an app to detailed, real-time production data from your system. Should you ever notice that it is not producing power as expected, you should contact the installer.

Do I need to clean my solar panels?

Solar panels are typically adequately cleaned by regular precipitation. The minor dustiness that might accumulate during prolonged dry spells won't affect system performance significantly. That being said, if the panels appear particularly dirty during a prolonged drought, rinsing them with a directed stream of water from a hose is all that's required should you wish to wash them.

Do I need to remove snow from my solar panels?

Under most circumstances snow will melt off your panels within several hours to several days after a snowfall. You typically will not lose a significant amount of production from your system due to snow coverage, especially since solar production is lower in the winter months than during the rest of the year. The length of time it takes to melt will depend primarily on the amount of snow, the air temperature, how sunny the weather is, and the pitch of your roof and the solar system. If there is a heavy snowfall and you have a roof with a relatively low pitch and/or the weather is extremely cold or cloudy after the snowfall, you may wish to carefully remove snow from your panels with a long-handled snow rake to allow your system to return to full production more quickly.

How long can I expect my solar system to last?

As mentioned above, the warranty on the major components of your system will likely be 25 years. It's reasonable to expect the system to continue to produce power for at least 30 years.

What happens at the end of my solar system's life?

At the end of the system's life (30+ years), it will eventually need to be removed from your roof, most likely at a time when your home is being reroofed. It's highly likely that the recycling value of the materials in the system will mean that this will be an inexpensive operation.

Will my solar system be covered by my homeowner's insurance?

Yes! You should talk to your insurance agent, as a rider may be required for full and adequate coverage. This should add minimal cost to your premium.

Will my panels be damaged by hail? What happens if they are?

Panels are designed to resist damage from small to moderate hail (at least 1" in diameter). It's possible though unlikely that the panels could be damaged by extremely large hail. If they are damaged, individual damaged panels can be replaced by your installer. Depending on the panel warranty, this may or may not be covered by warranty.

What happens to my solar system if my roof needs to be replaced because of hail or wind damage?

If your roof needs to be replaced, the solar system will need to be removed by your installer then reinstalled after the new roof is completed. This should be covered under your homeowner's insurance policy – check with your insurance agent to confirm this.

Will a solar system affect my home's assessed property value or resale value?

Your solar system will not likely affect your home's assessed property value (and thus property taxes). However, several recent studies have shown that solar systems increase a home's resale value. A 2019 national analysis by Zillow found that homes with installed solar systems sold for an average of 4.1% more than comparable homes without solar systems.

How can I tell how well my solar system is performing?

The installer should give you a detailed estimate of how much power you can expect your system to produce on a monthly and annual basis. The installer will also either directly provide you access to detailed, real-time information of your system's performance via an app that monitors the system's inverter or will show you how to set up access to this inverter monitoring system yourself. You can then check the system's real-time performance whenever you care to and look at reports detailing how much power has been produced on a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis. You can compare this actual production data to the installer's estimate. If the production varies significantly from the installer's estimate, you may wish to speak with the installer about possible reasons for the discrepancy.

How is the performance of my solar system reflected in my monthly electric bill?

Your system will be what is referred to as a "net-metered" system. What this means is that when your system is producing power, the power will first flow to your home. If more power is being produced than your home requires, power is sent out to the grid, and you will be powering your neighbor's homes as well. When your system is not producing enough power to satisfy your home's electricity needs, you will import power from the grid just as you always have. You will have a new utility meter that measures both how much power you send out to the grid, and how much you import from the grid. You will only be charged for the net difference. In some months (late spring through early fall), you may export more power to the grid than you import and actually get a credit on your electric bill or have a check sent to you, depending on your utility's practices. Solar systems typically produce significantly less power in the late fall to early spring months, and you will likely import more power than you export in these months, but will still have a lower electric bill than you have had in the past.