

Free Solar PV Frequently Asked Questions

What would happen to the solar PV system during a power cut?

For safety reasons, the output of the solar PV system would be automatically turned off if it were to detect a power cut. It would then automatically restart when the mains power is live again, so you would not need to take any action.

How does any surplus electricity generated by a solar PV system return to the National Grid?

The system is installed in accordance with the latest electrical installation guidelines. The Installation Company will advise your District Network Operator (DNO) that you have installed a solar PV system on your roof and also deal with the associated paperwork.

Is a solar PV system covered by Building Regulations?

Yes the MCS-accredited installer will inform Building Control.

Does the solar PV system need to be serviced regularly?

No. As solar PV panels have no moving parts and the other components, such as cables and connectors, are designed to withstand the typical environmental conditions expected on an exposed roof. We suggest that periodically you should simply visually inspect your system from ground level only. If you notice any damage, then you should contact us and we will take the necessary action.

Do the solar panels need to be cleaned regularly?

No. In most cases, rain will usually do all of the cleaning required.

Will I need planning permission for my solar PV system installation?

Most residential properties do not usually need planning permission for solar PV system installations unless your building is Listed or in a Conservation Area. If you are a commercial property owner it is more likely that you will need planning permission for a solar PV system installation. If this were the case, then the accredited installer will be able to assist you with the planning application. However, the property owner would be responsible for the cost of the planning application if it were necessary to obtain planning approval.

Do I have to switch the solar PV system on each day?

No because it will be working all of the time. When there is no daylight, the system will be effectively on 'standby'. You do not have to switch the system on or off.

How much electricity can I use when the solar PV system is in operation?

You can use as much electricity as you wish. If you require more electricity than the amount produced by the solar PV system, then your additional requirement will automatically be drawn from the National Grid via your existing electricity supplier. You will not notice any differences in your property other than a saving in the cost of your electricity.



Will I receive a certificate for all the electrical work carried out during the solar PV system installation which I will be able to show a prospective purchaser if I were to sell the property?

Yes.

What will happen when I sell my property?

The benefit of the free solar PV electricity will simply pass to the new property owner. There are statistics available from the Energy Saving Trust which show that properties with an installed solar PV system have sold on average 30% more quickly than those without it.

What happens if we do not use all of the electricity generated by the solar PV system during the day?

Any surplus solar PV electricity is automatically exported into the National Grid.

Who is responsible for insuring the solar PV system?

The owners of the system are responsible for insuring (including public liability risk) the complete solar PV system for the full term of the lease agreement with you.

Does the solar PV system make any noise when they are generating the electricity?

No, there are no moving parts.

How can I be sure that I am not being charged by my normal supplier at times when I am using solar PV electricity?

After the solar PV system has been installed, you will use your electricity as normal. If there is electricity being produced by the solar PV system when you use any electrical appliance, then automatically it will use the solar PV electricity first. If there is not sufficient solar PV electricity being produced to meet your needs at any point in time, or if it is night-time, then you automatically will use electricity from your usual supplier.

Is there a switch to change from the solar PV electricity to my normal electricity supply?

No. When you use any electrical appliance the system will automatically use the solar PV electricity first. If there is not sufficient solar PV electricity being produced to meet your needs at any point in time, or if it is night-time, then you automatically will use electricity from your usual supplier.

What if a problem were to arise with the solar PV system?

The System owners are able to monitor the installed PV systems remotely. Consequently, they should be able to determine that there is a problem with the system so that they can arrange for the fault to be rectified as soon as possible.

Will I need to read our solar PV generation meter regularly?

No. There will be a remotely-operated meter at your property which should send us the necessary information electronically.

How much money will I save each year by using this free electricity?

Your annual saving depends entirely on the amount of free solar PV electricity which you use during daylight hours. The total number of daylight hours over the course of a year is reasonably consistent so the total amount of solar PV electricity is unlikely to vary significantly from year to year.



Will I still receive an electricity bill?

Yes because you will still have a contract with your main Electricity Supplier. However, your electricity bills will be significantly lower than before the installation of the solar PV system since you will be able to use free solar PV electricity during daylight hours.

Will I have to change Electricity Supplier?

No you will retain the right to change your electricity supplier at your convenience. If you were planning to change supplier, then you will simply need to inform us about your planned change to a new supplier.

Will my electricity supply be disrupted during the installation process?

Yes but only for approximately 20 minutes to allow our installer's electrician to complete the installation.

Will our roof covering be damaged during the installation?

The installers have extensive experience in working on roofs with a variety of coverings. In the unlikely event that the roof covering on your property is damaged in the fitting process, the installer will repair it at no cost to you. All of the work performed by MCS-accredited installers is fully insured and, therefore, they will be responsible for any installation damage (should there be any).

Will my roof be able to withstand the additional weight?

The MCS-accredited installer will ensure that your roof structure has sufficient load-bearing capacity to support the weight of the solar PV installation. Each solar panel (measuring about 1.6 m long x 1.0m wide x 40 mm thick weighs approximately 20kg which is around 25% of the weight of the average man).

Will the panels make our roof more insecure in high winds?

No because the solar panels will be fitted securely to the roof structure so that there is a gap of only 100 to 150 mm between the panels and the roof covering. Consequently, even in strong winds, there will be very little uplift caused by wind blowing under the panels. Furthermore, the fixing system has been rigorously tested to ensure stability in severe weather conditions.

Can I purchase the solar PV system from you during the 20 years duration agreement?

This is a possibility. However, the sale price would be based on our assessment of the residual value of the FIT revenue contract.

Can any property owner have one of your free solar PV systems installed?

Solar PV systems will operate on roofs facing any direction. However, the Free Solar scheme will only install systems on roofs which will achieve optimum performance since they only receive FIT revenue for the electricity which is generated.

Can solar PV installations achieve a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions?

Yes because solar PV systems produce no atmospheric emissions or greenhouse gases whilst generating electricity.



Are Solar PV panels fragile?

No because solar PV panels are designed to withstand tough environmental conditions and have been shown over many years of operation to be both robust and reliable. In fact, solar PV panels are encased in both toughened glass on exposed areas and a weatherproof resistant polymer on the underside. In the unlikely event that the panels do require maintenance and/or repair, the Owners will cover these costs.

Is the installation of a solar PV system complicated and disruptive for the property owner?

No because the accredited installers have highly-trained and efficient fitting teams which can usually install a complete solar PV system in one to two days (plus another couple of hours to erect and take down the scaffolding when the property occupier does not need to be present). The installer's electrician will only need access to your loft space in order to fit a voltage inverter and a specialist meter. The installation process is not disruptive since most of the work is carried out on top of your roof. Obviously, if the weather were inclement then the installation timescale could be longer.

Will a solar PV system work during winter months?

Yes. Solar panels still work well during the winter even though daylight hours are reduced compared with the summer. As soon as day breaks, light is absorbed by the panels and they immediately start to generate electricity. The only weather which would prevent any output from solar panels is a snowfall which blocks the light completely. However, even when it snows, the snow rarely lasts on a south-facing pitched roof for any length of time.

Is there sufficient sunshine in the UK for a Solar PV system to work effectively?

Yes because solar panels are powered by light (not heat) so they do not need to be in direct sunshine. There is sufficient light, even on a cloudy day, for solar panels to extract the energy which they need in order to generate electricity.

Solar panels will generate electricity from sunrise to sunset. Consequently, at the height of the British Summer you could use free solar PV electricity for up to 17 hours every day.

Will you require frequent access for maintenance work?

No, since solar PV systems are designed to require very little maintenance. If it were necessary to perform some maintenance work, you would be contacted to arrange a suitable date and time for access.

Who is responsible for the maintenance of the solar PV system?

The system owners are responsible for system maintenance and use the maintenance team of an MCS-accredited installer to perform the necessary work at no cost to the property owner. Throughout the term of the agreement with the property owner, the system owner we will be responsible for all of the maintenance and repair work at no charge to the property owner to ensure that solar PV electricity continues to be generated.

Will it be difficult to sell a property with a solar PV system fixed to the roof?

No. The Energy Saving Trust has collected statistical data which shows that homes with solar PV installations usually sell up to 30% faster than homes without these installations.



Will the property owner have to pay any costs during the 20 years duration agreement?

No, the agreement with the property owner states that at no time throughout the term of the agreement will the property owner be asked to pay any costs associated with the solar PV system.

Will the property owner own the solar PV system during the 20 years duration of the agreement?

No. The investment company will retain ownership until the end of lease agreement. At the end of this contract period, ownership of the solar PV system will be transferred to the property owner in perpetuity. Consequently, the property owner will be able to continue to benefit from the electricity generated as well as benefit from any tariffs.

How can you afford to install a solar PV system free of charge?

This is a viable proposition for the investment company since the UK Government's Feed in Tariff (FIT) Scheme was introduced on 1st April 2010. They will be paid for all of the electricity which the solar PV system will. This Generation Tariff is paid to them by the electricity supply companies which are obliged to pay the tariffs in accordance with Government legislation. Consequently, they are able to fit a free solar PV system onto any roof which satisfies their Criteria and to allow the property occupier to use all of the electricity which is generated free of charge.

