

How To Optimize Your Investment in Solar Energy

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As prices decline and technology improves, installing a solar system — also called a photovoltaic or PV system — is making sense for more and more property owners. More than 1,400 San Isabel Electric members are solar owners, and that number grows every day. While PV systems are very durable and virtually maintenance free, there is always a better way to use them to their best potential. PV solar systems are always an investment into your home and lifestyle. Keeping up with maintenance and changing some habits are the key to your PV system's lifespan and to see a great return on your investment.

Here is a basic list of best practices and ways to take full advantage of your solar investment.

SHADING AND DEBRIS

Check for debris or shading on your solar system. Every square inch of the panels makes a difference in production. Get your panels cleaned, especially in a dry environment where rain is rare. Just a quick rinse with a hose is enough for almost every situation.

DO HOUSEHOLD CHORES DURING THE DAY

Running appliances during the day takes full advantage of your solar system. Try to stagger their use so you never use more electricity than what your system is producing.

BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION

If your system is sized correctly, you should only be paying the \$30 monthly grid access charge most months, and not exporting much power. If you are exporting excess power, it might be time to think about beneficial electrification. Electric heat pump water heaters use 75% less energy than a conventional water heater and are ideal for any solar system — and SIEA offers a great rebate on heat pump water heaters.

BUNDLING ENERGY-EFFICIENCY UPGRADES

Bundling solar with energy-efficiency upgrades may help you generate savings from day one. Reduce your electric consumption by making energy-saving improvements. Making improvements before going solar results in a smaller-sized system thus saving you thousands in upfront costs and interest. Some improvements include replacing your old water heater, adding insulation, or installing a whole house attic/high-volume-low-speed fan. If you've already made the leap, these projects may still help reduce your consumption of grid energy.



Make the most of your rooftop solar investment: Do your research and follow best practices.

YOU'RE SMART! DON'T FALL FOR "TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE" SCAMS

Don't trust anyone that tells you when you add solar, your meter will spin backwards and that you won't have an electric bill after going solar.

First, meters have not, do not, and will not ever spin backwards if they're working correctly. Second, everyone connected to the grid pays the \$30 monthly grid access charge. SIEA's grid access charge ensures you have access to electricity when your PV solar system is not generating. And it covers the associated costs of repairing damage, maintaining power lines, and restoring outages. You will have to go off grid if you don't want an electric bill.

SIEA will never go door-to-door to ask you for money or inspect your meter without notifying you first. Our employees all wear clothing with the SIEA logo, and they all drive SIEA-marked vehicles. We are happy to verify if one of our employees is really on your doorstep. Just give us a call at 800-279-SIEA, option 3.