

General Solar Questions & Answers



Q: Does SDG&E® support local rooftop solar?

A: Yes. We're committed to local solar power generation systems and incorporating them into the grid in a way that both maintains system reliability and is cost efficient. San Diego has one of the highest adoption rates of customer-side solar panel installations in the country.

Q: What's SDG&E doing to support solar?

A: We've installed solar on more than 40 facilities owned by non-profit organizations, government, schools, universities and businesses. We've also installed photovoltaic (PV) systems on our own facilities. In 2017, we supplied 43 percent of our energy from renewable sources and we're on track to exceed our 2020 goal.

Q: What's SDG&E doing to make it easier to get rooftop solar?

A: You can get solar-related information and watch a video at sdge.com/solar. There's also an online solar calculator you can use to determine the optimal size solar system to suit your needs. In addition, we work directly with homeowners and solar installers to make the process of becoming a Net Energy Metering (NEM) customer as smooth as possible. Our Fast Track option speeds up the interconnection approval process to operate your solar system. It can be connected within two weeks.

Q: Are any solar incentives available?

A: There's a federal investment tax credit (ITC) available for residential and business customers. The credit allows you to deduct 30 percent of the cost of installing a solar energy system from your federal taxes.

Q: What about customers that don't own a home but want to buy solar power?

A: We believe solar power should be affordable and easily available to any customer who wants it. Our EcoChoiceSM and EcoShareSM programs allow you to purchase renewable power for your home or business. For more information, visit sdge.com/ecochoice.

Q: If I generate more power than I use, why don't I get paid for the excess power at the same rate as I am charged by SDG&E?

A: Energy is a commodity that we buy at a wholesale rate regardless of the size of the system or entity that provides it to us. Customers are charged at a retail rate which is the wholesale rate plus the cost to deliver it and other expenses such as taxes, public programs, etc. The credit shown on your statement from net energy metering is at the retail rate.

Q: Doesn't SDG&E lose money when customers generate their own power?

A: We don't make money based upon how much energy our customers use. In 1982, utility profits were separated from customer usage in order to promote energy efficiency. Utilities have no financial incentive to encourage customers to use more energy.

Q: How much will I save on utility bills if I purchase a rooftop solar system?

A: Unfortunately, there's no single or simple answer. Your savings will depend upon what tier you reach each month and how much energy your system off-sets when generating. The amount of generation depends upon

the size of the system and the amount of sunlight it receives. We recommend to customers considering rooftop solar to first reduce their energy use as much as possible before making a decision about what size their PV system should be.

Q: Why do I still need to receive a bill from SDG&E if I generate my own power?

A: SDG&E needs to charge for metering and other services to serve and bill solar customers when they need energy and their system isn't generating power.

Q: What is net metering and is it available where I live and work?

A: Net metering is a program that allows homeowners to receive a bill credit for the electricity that their solar energy system produces. Net metering allows homeowners with PV systems to use any excess electricity they produce to offset their electric bill. As the PV system produces electricity, the kilowatts are first used to meet energy needs within the home. If the PV system produces more electricity than the homeowner needs when the energy is being generated, the extra kilowatts are fed into the grid. Customers who have solar or wind energy systems and produce more energy than they use can earn bill credits for the excess power put back into the SDG&E grid. That credit can be used later to cover the power needed from SDG&E during times when self-generation isn't enough.

Q: Once I install solar will I still be on SDG&E's grid?

A: Yes. While solar can provide you with a large reduction in your energy use, your system will not be able to provide you with power when the sun isn't shining, either when it's cloudy or at night. During periods when you use more energy than your system produces, your energy needs must be delivered from the grid. This safety feature is required in all grid-connected PV systems; it also ensures that the PV system will not continue to operate and feed back onto the utility grid when the grid is down for service or repair.

Q: Some solar companies call me and say they're part of or representing SDG&E. Is SDG&E calling people and offering to sell and/or install solar rooftop?

A: No. SDG&E isn't in the solar rooftop sales or installation business, so it's inaccurate if a company states that they're part of or representing SDG&E.

Q: Where can I learn more?

A. For more information on solar, watch our video at sdge.com/solar.