

# Solar Energy: Frequently Asked Questions



## Selecting a Contractor

### Does NBU install solar panels?

NBU does not install solar panels, nor troubleshoot existing systems. However, NBU allows customers to work with the installer of their choice.

### Does NBU recommend solar contractors?

NBU does not recommend specific solar contractors. However, NBU offers a list of Participating Solar Contractors that customers must use to be eligible for the Solar Rebate of up to \$3,000.

## Sizing Your System

### Does NBU have any size restrictions?

NBU does not have any size restrictions on residential solar installations. The limitation for commercial systems is 999kW.

### How large of a solar system do I need?

This depends on your overall goals. On average, a 1 kW solar system will generate around 100-120 kWh/month. This means that if your home's average energy usage is around 1,200 kWh/month, you may need a 10-12 kW system to completely offset your regular monthly consumption. Additionally, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory ("NREL") offers a free calculator to estimate solar costs. To access this free calculator, visit [pvwatts.nrel.gov](http://pvwatts.nrel.gov).

### What if I want to increase my existing solar system's size later?

Contact NBU's Electric Engineering Department by email and a technician will be assigned to review your project.

## Net-Metering

### Will my meter roll backwards?

No, your meter will not roll backwards. A separate meter will be installed to register your solar production. Any production will be subtracted from your overall energy usage, and you will be billed for the difference.

***Energy Consumption - Energy Generation = Total Energy Billed***

### What if I produce more energy than I use in a month?

If your system produces more energy than you used in a month, that over-production will be applied to your account as a 1:1 kWh credit at the end of the month and carried forward. NBU will reach out to customers if this billing practice changes in the future.

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## **Will my meter change if I install solar?**

Homes with solar are required to have two meters. One meter is a dedicated solar generation meter that measures energy generated by your solar system. The second is a consumption meter that measures energy used on site, both from your solar system and/or supplied from NBU. If there is a backup battery installed with a smart switch, a one-meter system can be accepted for the duration the switch is in operation.

## **Billing**

### **I've heard that I won't get a bill from NBU anymore. Is that true?**

No. While solar generation can save money, depending on the current cost of energy, customers will still receive a monthly NBU bill. Included in the bill will be a monthly Delivery Point Charge of \$1.58/kW of system size, along with the Electric Service Availability Charge of \$20.00 and charges for any other services you may have (water, wastewater).

### **How much money can I save on my NBU bill if I purchase a solar system?**

That depends on many factors to include, but are not limited to, the size of the system being considered, the general direction the system will be aimed, and if there are any obstructions that might impede the sunlight to your solar panels. NBU staff can help you to understand the savings potential or homeowners can use unbiased free online resources such as Google's Project Sunroof.

## **Connected to the Grid**

### **Can I go off-grid with solar?**

While it is possible to go off-grid, solar by itself may not be enough to offset your home's energy usage. It is recommended to consult your solar contractor about installing additional components, batteries, and charge controllers for added reliability.

### **Can I connect and charge a battery with my solar system?**

Yes! Current NBU Electrical Connections Policy allows for back up battery systems. Please reference the policy [here](#) for more information.

### **What happens to my solar system if there is a power outage/blackout?**

A standard grid-connected solar system is required to switch-off to prevent the extra energy from being sent to the power line, creating a safety hazard to line workers. If the goal is to operate your solar panels during an outage/blackout, a battery will be necessary.

### **What if I decide to remove my solar system?**

Customers should notify NBU if they decide to remove solar from their home so that the monthly solar net metering surcharge can be discontinued from their bill.

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## Rebate

### Is there a rebate?

Yes, NBU offers a rebate of up to \$3,000 to residential electric customers that use a Participating Solar Contractor. If all requirements are met and the rebate is approved, a credit will be applied to the customer's NBU electric account within 1-2 billing cycles. Get started by watching the Going Solar Education Course to learn more about solar and the rebate program.

### Do you have more questions?

Please contact us via email at [solar@nbutexas.com](mailto:solar@nbutexas.com).