

learnaboutsolar

presented by  SolarCorp

Getting Started Guide 2017 / 2018



Solar energy is rapidly growing in popularity across Canada. With installation companies offering ever-lower pricing and energy corporations beginning to allow for net-metering, the time has never been better to save money and cut back on your personal CO2 emission with solar energy.

We have created this short e-book as a way of introducing you to solar energy in Canada, and helping you in the process of going solar.

Overview

There are two types of solar systems a homeowner may decide to purchase. A 'rooftop' system can be easily and quickly installed onto the roof of your home and is usually the best and most economical option for urban homeowners. On the other hand, a 'ground-mounted' system can be installed nearly as easily and is best if you don't have the roof space available to produce enough electricity for your needs, and if you have the space available to you. The latter option is best for those who live in rural areas on farms or acreages.

Most utilities providers offer net-metering as a way of ensuring your needs are met with minimal cost. Additionally, many areas are covered by government rebates either on the local, provincial, or federal levels. We have included a listing of rebates and incentives that are currently available in each Canadian province at the end of this e-book.

Choosing a solar provider

Once you decide to go solar, there's no doubt you will notice the sheer number of companies offering solar services and it can be hard to choose the right one.

Be sure to always read online reviews, or if someone in your neighborhood has already gone solar, talk to them and get their opinion on their local solar providers.

There is a checklist we have created for you;

- Read customer reviews
- How long have they been in business and/or how many installs have they completed? Many solar companies are quite new, and you want to make sure that they are experienced.
- Professional appearance? Many local companies are run as part-time operations. You want to make sure they will be there to support you with maintenance and financial services.
- Equipment: Make sure that your prospective company carries reputable equipment. Many manufacturers offer warranties of up to and over 25 years, and you want to ensure they'll be around to back that up. Some reputable panel makers are **Canadian Solar**, **LG**, as well as **Samsung**.
- Licensing: Installing a solar system requires permits and an electrician. Be sure to check that your provider has all applicable licensing and meets your local regulatory standards.
- Financing: While you can buy your system upfront, many larger providers offer financing and other services such as solar leases to help with the financial burden of going solar. Ask your prospective supplier about financing options.
- Monitoring: Most companies offer free-of-charge 24/7 monitoring of your systems production through your computer, smartphone, or tablet. Be sure to ask if this is something you are interested in.

Net-metering

Having a net-meter installed is essential in the process of going solar.

With a net-metering setup, your utilities company will be able to credit you for any solar energy that you don't use. Usually homeowners can either be credited towards their accounts or may be paid cash based upon current electricity rates.

In Canada, as a result of our unique climate, solar systems don't produce as much power in the winter months. Net-metering allows you to use

credit built up in the summer months to cover your electrical costs in the winter and save you money.

The process

Although your specific journey to solar may vary slightly based upon your current utilities provider, the solar installer you choose, and your energy needs, there is a basic standard timeline of what going solar will look like for you.

It usually starts with a phone call or online application to a local solar provider. A solar quote and consultation is generally offered free-of-charge and with no obligation for you to buy or commit to anything. This is the stage where you will have to use your checklist we have provided in the last section to ensure you choose the right solar company to meet your needs, support any maintenance requirements and abide by any applicable regulations.

After you reach out to a solar provider, they will usually schedule a time to meet with you at your home or business. During this initial meeting it is not unusual for them to take measurements and photographs of your roof, or the area you want your system to be installed in order to help them in the design and quotation process. To ensure a proper price, your provider should design or engineer your system before providing you with an initial quotation.

Once you have received and approved your quote, now is the time to apply for net-metering. Most utility providers in Canada offer this. The application and approval process can take months to complete. This and waiting for appropriate permits will be the longest process in going solar.

After permits have been obtained (your solar provider should handle any permit applications on your behalf) and your new meter has been installed, you will be asked to schedule an installation time.

Installation for most residential systems, whether mounted on the ground or rooftop takes less than one day. After this an application can be submitted for any applicable rebates or incentives currently being offered. Your system will also need to be inspected before it can be turned on or activated. This process can take up to 3 months; however, it usually takes much less time, and can be completed in as little as week.

Once your system has passed inspection and can be turned on, you are ready to enjoy the benefits of your new solar system. Most systems can be monitored free-of-charge through your computer, smartphone, or tablet.

Current rebates & incentives:

Federal Incentives

- Current federal incentives are aimed at businesses and power generation projects, and include tax write-offs and savings of 30% or more. [Offered by NRCAN.](#)

British Columbia

- No incentive(s) currently available.

Alberta

- \$0.75/watt. The lesser of \$10,000.00 or 30% of total system cost. [Offered by Efficiency Alberta.](#)

Saskatchewan

- 20% rebate, up to a total payout of \$20,000.00. [Offered by SaskPower.](#)

Manitoba

- Residential system loan up to 15-years at 4.9 per cent interest rate. [Offered by Manitoba Hydro.](#)
- \$1 per watt installed. [Offered by Manitoba Hydro.](#)

Ontario

- “Micro-FIT Program.” Homeowners paid a guaranteed price for electricity produced. [Offered by Ontario Ministry of Energy.](#)

Quebec

- No incentive(s) currently available.

Newfoundland & Labrador

- No incentive(s) currently available.

New Brunswick

- No incentive(s) currently available.

Nova Scotia

- No incentive(s) currently available.

Prince Edward Island

- No incentives currently available.

Yukon Territory, N.W.T., Nunavut Territory

- No incentive(s) currently available.

Thank you for taking the time to read our short e-book, the official *Getting Started with Solar* guide.

Be sure to browse our website, www.LearnAboutSolar.ca for more information about solar in Canada, and to learn more about our partnership with recommended provider SolarCorp.

We will make every effort to ensure information in this guide remains updated as further developments occur relating to solar technologies and incentives in Canada.