



California Solar Consumer Protection Guide

Putting solar panels and/or batteries on your home is an important financial decision. Don't sign a contract until you read and sign this document!

This guide is from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), a government agency that regulates utility companies like Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Liberty Utilities, Bear Valley Electric Service, and PacifiCorp.

Customers of the companies mentioned above must sign this guide to connect a residential solar system to the electric grid. The CPUC requires these companies to collect your signed copy of this guide to ensure that you know your rights and have enough information to make a decision.

Guide Accessibility

Audio recording available at 855-955-1535.

Español, 中文, 한국어, Tiếng Việt, Tagalog, Armenian, Portuguese, and Dari audio versions available at 866-849-8390.



Learn more best practices for going solar.

View a longer version of the California Solar Consumer Protection Guide with even more information at www.cpuc.ca.gov/solarguide. Or use the camera on your mobile device to go to the link through the QR code below:

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If you think you have been a victim of solar fraud or have been denied any of the rights on the next page, you may file a complaint against a contractor or home improvement salesperson with the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) at 800-321-CSLB (2752) or www.cslb.ca.gov/consumers.

If you think you've been a victim of financial fraud, visit www.dfp.ca.gov/file-a-complaint.

Know Your Rights

You have the right...

...to read this entire guide before signing a contract.

The CPUC recommends that solar providers give out this guide during their first contact with potential customers. Do not feel pressured to read this guide while the salesperson waits. Ask them to come back at a later date to allow you time to read it.

...to a copy of a solar contract and financing agreement in the language in which the salesperson spoke to you.

If a solar provider or salesperson comes to sell you solar panels and speaks to you in a language other than English, they must give you a copy of the contract in that language. Also, if you prefer to read this guide in Armenian, Chinese, Dari, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Tagalog, or Vietnamese, the solar provider or salesperson must give you this guide in that language.

...to a Solar Disclosure Document from your solar provider.

By law, a solar provider must provide you with a completed Solar Energy System Disclosure Document created by the Contractors State License Board (CSLB). This document shows you the total costs for the solar energy system and other important financial information. A blank version of this document is available at cslb.ca.gov/consumers/solar_smart.

...to a 3-day cancellation period after signing a contract.

You have at least three business days to cancel your contract for any reason, or 5 days if you are 65 or older. You may cancel the contract by emailing, mailing, faxing, or delivering a notice to your solar provider by midnight of the third business day after you received a signed, dated copy of the contract. Note that different rules may apply for contracts negotiated at a company's place of business.

Watch Out for False Claims

Most solar providers are honest and fair. However, if a salesperson makes one of these false claims to you, do not do business with them.

False Claim

You can get free solar energy at no cost to you.

The Truth

Solar energy is rarely free. An honest company will be upfront about all the costs you will pay over time. There may be some exceptions for qualifying low-income homeowners and residential properties taking part in the Disadvantaged Communities – Single family Solar Homes (DAC-SASH) program for income-qualified homeowners in disadvantaged communities, or the Self-Generation Incentive Program (SGIP). Go to www.cpuc.ca.gov/solarguide/lowincomesolar to see if you qualify.

You will never pay an electricity bill again after a solar system is installed.

Going solar reduces, but does not eliminate, your monthly utility bill. Customers who take out a solar loan or sign a lease or power purchase agreement will also receive a monthly bill from a loan company or solar provider.

You must sign now to get solar.

An honest salesperson would never rush you to sign anything without giving you time to review what you are signing. California law requires that a salesperson show you the contract terms before you sign. Ready everything carefully! You are also legally entitled to ask to sign a paper copy of this document with a wet signature.

You can take advantage of solar business tax credits if you register yourself as an LLC.

Getting solar or storage on a residential property means you won't qualify for business tax credits. Anybody telling you to start a limited liability company (LLC) to go solar is trying to convince you to do something illegal and you shouldn't do business with them.

Customer Initials: _____



If you think you have been a victim of solar fraud or have been denied any of the rights on the next page, you may file a complaint against a contractor or home improvement salesperson with the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) at 800-321-CSLB (2752) or www.cslb.ca.gov/consumers.

If you think you've been a victim of financial fraud, visit www.dfp.ca.gov/file-a-complaint.



Before You Sign a Contract

Make sure to get bids from at least 3 different solar providers. Look up how to compare quotes online and compare the bids you've obtained. Note that the cheapest bid is not necessarily the best option for you. A very low bid may indicate that a solar provider is trying to cut corners. **Don't hesitate to ask any solar provider questions.**

Ask for the solar provider's CSLB license number. If you were contacted by a telephone or door-to-door salesperson, ask for their individual home improvement salesperson (HIS) registration number. Check the number(s) to make sure they are valid and associated with the solar provider by going to www.cslb.ca.gov/consumers or calling 800-321-CSLB (2752).

CSLB License Number is: _____

(If applicable)

HIS Registration Number is: _____

The CSLB license must be active and should hold license classification(s) C-46 (Solar Contractor), C-10 (Electrical Contractor), and/or B (General Building Contractor) in order to install a residential solar energy system.

“Before You Sign” Checklist

Make sure you have completed these items before you sign any documents!

Do not sign anything if you feel you need more time to do research or think about your decision.

- Get at least 3 bids for solar at your home.
- Carefully read all the other documents that the solar provider provides you. These at minimum should include: 1) Solar Energy System Disclosure Document, 2) contract, and 3) financial paperwork.
- Check to see if you qualify for any low-income solar programs at cpuc.ca.gov/solarguide/lowincomesolar which have strong protections for consumers.
- Consider making your home more energy efficient before getting solar. This could save you money and be more affordable than installing solar.
- Visit the CPUC Solar Consumer Protection Guide website, www.cpuc.ca.gov/solarguide, for more information on what to look for in a good provider and how to protect yourself against fraud.
- Ask the solar provider for 3 customer references and call or visit them.
- Check to make sure the solar provider's license, and if applicable, the home improvement salesperson's registration number, is current and valid with the Contractors State License Board at: www.cslb.ca.gov/onlineservices/checklicenseii/checklicense.aspx
- Understand the timeline of what happens after you sign a contract for solar.
- If you are getting battery storage with your solar system, make sure you understand the different settings your battery can be set at to fit your financial and energy goals. Have your installer walk through the different options if you haven't.
- Understand how your electricity bill will work once you install solar or a battery. Ask your installer and/or your utility company to explain it to you.
- Check to see if your solar provider is listed on the CPUC's Public List of Non-Compliant Solar Providers at: www.cpuc.ca.gov/solarpubliclist
- If you are financing your system through a third party, ask the lender, solar provider, or program administrator to explain the financing arrangement. Find a list of important questions to ask at www.cpuc.ca.gov/solarguide
- Save copies of all the documents you receive. This includes downloading a hard copy of your documents to your computer, or even printing them out. The information will be useful if you sell your home, need to replace your roof, or have any repair or maintenance issues.

Sign This Guide

Do not feel pressured to read all your documents while the salesperson waits.

You can ask them to come back at a later date to allow you time to read your contract and this guide before you sign. Please affirm each of the statements below by initialing each line. If a statement does not apply to you, write “N/A” instead. Each box MUST contain your initials or “N/A.” Keep track of any questions you have.

Customer

Please affirm each of the statements below by checking each box. If a statement does not apply to you, write “N/A” in that statement’s box. Each box MUST be checked or contain an “N/A.”

- I have not yet entered into a contract for solar with the solar provider signing.
- The solar provider provided me with a copy of this 7-page Solar Consumer Protection Guide before they collected my signature below.
- The solar provider gave me the time to read this entire 7-page guide and visit the CPUC’s online Solar Consumer Protection Guide (www.cpuc.ca.gov/solarguide).
- I was provided an option to sign this Solar Consumer Protection Guide electronically or in handwriting if I requested.
- If I was solicited as part of a door-to-door sale and did not expressly request an electronic format, a copy of the Solar Consumer Protection Guide was provided in paper format.
- The solar provider gave me the opportunity to read this guide in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Armenian, Portuguese, or Dari if they spoke to me in one of those languages.
- If I choose to sign the Solar Consumer Protection Guide electronically, I am using an email address that was created and controlled by me prior to the sale, lease, or power purchase agreement.
- I have received a Solar Energy System Disclosure Document, which lists the financial details of my solar and or/battery system.
- In Section 4 “Energy Savings” of the Solar Energy System Disclosure Document, if the solar provider was not able to use my one-hour interval electric consumption data, the solar provider has given me a satisfactory explanation as to why, and I attest that they made a reasonable effort to access this data.
- I understand that any estimate I receive on my potential electricity bill savings not contained in the Solar Energy System Disclosure Document was calculated using the

average electricity rate escalation calculated by the CPUC, at most. I can find this maximum average at www.cpuc.ca.gov/solarguide, and can ask my installer what rate was used at any time.

- I have asked my contractor for an explanation of any bill savings estimate I received.
- The solar provider has explained and provided me documentation on the finances of this installation, including how much I am paying now, how much I will be paying each month, and how any interest or escalation rates will affect my payments in the future.

By signing, I affirm that I have read and understand the California Solar Consumer Protection Guide. I also affirm that information from my solar contract, interconnection application, Solar Energy System Disclosure Document, and/or financing agreement may be reviewed and collected by state regulators to ensure compliance with California's solar consumer protection laws.

Customer Printed Name

Date

Customer Signature

Solar Provider

Company Representative Name

Date

Representative Signature

Company Phone

Company Name

Company Email

CSLB License Number

Company CSLB License Classification