

EnerStar Electric Cooperative Renewable Energy

FAQ

- **Does EnerStar allow renewable energy, like solar or wind generation, to be interconnected to their electric system?**
Yes, EnerStar does allow the safe interconnection of renewable energy to the co-op's distribution system.
- **When should I contact EnerStar about my plans for adding renewable energy to my house/business?**
As your trusted energy advisor, EnerStar is here to help guide you through the somewhat complex interconnection process of member-owned renewable energy systems. Prior to a financial commitment and/or installation, it is important that you contact EnerStar regarding your intent. This will ensure there are no questions left unanswered when it is time to connect to the EnerStar system.
- **Does EnerStar charge a fee for interconnecting renewable energy?**
To recover the some of the costs incurred by EnerStar during the interconnection process and for the special metering needed to connect to the EnerStar system, there is a non-refundable \$400 application fee required for renewable energy systems under 25kW AC. This fee will need to be paid at the time of application. Please contact us for information on systems 25kW AC and larger.
- **What size renewable energy system is allowed?**
Based upon local system capabilities, EnerStar will allow any size renewable energy system to safely interconnect to our electric system. Your member-owned generation should be appropriately sized for your home's energy needs. At most residences, a system up to 10KW AC is quite adequate.
- **What if I request a renewable energy system that is larger than my energy profile?**
If the KW requested is larger than your load profile, a System Impact Study may be necessary. The deposit for this study is \$3,000. This study is necessary to determine whether EnerStar's electric system can accommodate the excess electricity you would potentially put out onto the grid. Based on the study results, if any system upgrades are necessary, EnerStar will contact you with a maximum KW allowed to interconnect and/or the cost to upgrade the facilities to handle the requested KW. All construction costs must be paid prior to the solar installation. Please be advised there are different requirements and policies for systems above 25kW AC.
- **What if I generate more electricity than I need for my home?**
When your solar power system is generating more electricity than your needs, the excess electricity is delivered into EnerStar's system. You will be compensated for the excess generation at the co-op's avoided cost according to the net billing section of EnerStar's Power Purchase and Sales policy.

- **What does the term 'net billing' mean?**

Under EnerStar's net billing policy, both electricity consumption and net generation (excess electricity put onto the grid) are metered and billed separately. Members are charged the standard retail rate per kWh when they use energy from the EnerStar system. Members are compensated for any excess generation purchased by the cooperative at the co-op's avoided cost kwh rate.
- **What is avoided cost?**

Avoided cost is the price the cooperative would have paid to produce the same power itself or purchase it from another source, which is a market-based price. When a solar account is generating excess electricity and puts it out onto the EnerStar system, the cooperative is purchasing the excess electricity at the point of interconnection. The avoided cost rate reflects the cost of energy but does not include transmission and delivery system cost components. Think of it as the "raw price" of energy. This rate is reviewed and adjusted annually by EnerStar based upon then-current market rates for electricity.
- **What is the monthly Grid Access Fee?**

If you are interconnected to EnerStar's system, you will be charged, at a minimum, a monthly grid access fee. This fee covers the costs associated with poles, wires, substations, transformers, and operations necessary to deliver reliable electricity to your property.
- **Does EnerStar require the member to have insurance on the renewable energy system?**

EnerStar Electric Cooperative requires a one-million-dollar liability policy to be kept on the renewable energy system for the longevity of the installation. You must notify EnerStar of any changes or cancellations to the insurance policy as well as provide yearly renewal certificates. This policy protects the EnerStar electric system and the co-op employees at locations where a renewable energy system is installed.
- **Does EnerStar Electric Cooperative require a contract to be signed?**

EnerStar requires two policies to be reviewed and acknowledged via signature. These are Policy 16 "Interconnection and Parallel Operation of Distributed Generation" and Policy 17 "Member Purchases and Sales of Electric Service." These agreements include, but is not limited to, keeping insurance on the system, compliance with laws, rules, and regulations, ensuring that no changes have been made to the system and that the system will operate properly in the event of an outage.
- **Does the system act like a back-up generator when EnerStar's power goes off?**

No. During a power outage, EnerStar requires that the renewable energy system disconnect automatically from our electric system. This is done to prevent electricity from back-feeding into the distribution system. It is important to have generation disconnected from the system in order to prevent potential injury to co-op line crews working to restore power in a timely manner.
- **Are inspections required? What if I need to make changes/alterations to my system?**

EnerStar will do a final inspection of the renewable energy system to ensure it is properly interconnected to the EnerStar grid. After completion, no operational modifications or additional generation will be allowed on interconnected projects absent prior written consent from EnerStar.
- **Who do I contact with further questions?**

Please email any inquires to EnerStar Electric Cooperative at power@enerstar.com or feel free to call us at 800-635-4145.



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