

# A SMART START TO GOING SOLAR

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energy source for your home or business?  
We're here to support you.



A  Sempra Energy utility®

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We're here to support you.

At SDG&E®, we're already delivering around 40% of all our electricity from renewable sources, and helping customers like you pursue reliable, sustainable energy for a cleaner, greener future.

### WE'RE YOUR PARTNER

We'll be in lockstep with you throughout the process. Start at [sdge.com/solar](https://sdge.com/solar) to find tools and resources to help you make educated decisions about your options. Once your system is installed, you'll stay connected to our power grid to make sure you'll always have energy from the grid when you need it.

### EFFICIENCY FIRST!

You might be surprised how much energy you can save just by making a few changes to your usage habits and property. From small upgrades like LED light bulbs to investing in smart appliances, tackle your efficiency gaps first – you may even be able to reach your goals without investing in solar or other renewables.

### SHOULD YOU GO SOLAR?

Installing a renewable system is a commitment and an investment. We're here to support you in making an informed choice, based on your energy goals and property type.

#### PROS:

- Clean, renewable energy at home or work
- May reduce your overall monthly energy bill

#### CONS:

- May not be suitable for all property types
- Responsibility for maintenance and upkeep, depending on ownership structure



### TYPES OF RENEWABLE SYSTEMS

#### ROOFTOP SOLAR PANELS:

Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels are the most popular form of renewable energy. PV harnesses the sun's light particles and converts them into electricity.

#### SOLAR THERMAL SYSTEMS:

Unlike PV panels, which harness the sun's *light*, Solar Thermal Energy (STE) harnesses the sun's *heat*, and converts it into electricity for your home or heat for water.

#### OTHER RENEWABLES:

While less common, there are alternatives to solar energy, like wind and hydropower, available. Some of these options may not be suitable to residential or small-business customers.

**Small Wind:** Installing turbines may require special zoning.

**Hydropower:** Safe but expensive renewable energy. Drought sensitive.

**Biofuel:** Plant-based, carbon neutral fuels. Requires compatible equipment.

**Biomass:** Like biofuel, but also uses non-plant sources like waste and landfill gas.

**Fuel Cells:** This new technology converts chemicals, like hydrogen, into energy.

# READY TO GO RENEWABLE?

Once you've determined to go solar, you'll need to make two very important decisions:

## 1. Finding a Contractor

It's an important choice. Your contractor should be licensed and bonded and help you with permits and paperwork. A qualified contractor can help guide you through the process, but it's a good idea to do your own homework so you can make the right decisions for you.

- Get estimates in writing (we recommend at least three)
- Request references and check your contractor's record and reputation
- State and federal laws may provide a 3-day "cooling off" period to cancel your contract. Consult your legal professional.

Empower yourself and know your rights before signing. There are new rules governing solar installation, to protect and inform consumers.

Be sure to review the California Public Utilities Commission's recently published Solar Consumer Protection Guide to understand potential false claims about residential solar systems and provide homeowners with a roadmap on how to go solar. Solar providers submitting applications to interconnect residential solar customers are required to collect customer initials and a signature on the California Consumer Protection Guide starting September 30, 2019.



## 2. System Size

Determining the best system size for your property can impact your upfront and ongoing costs. If you install a system that's too large, you'll end up overinvesting and

generating more energy than you need. If you purchase a system undersized to your property, you'll invest less in equipment, but may use more supplemental electricity from the grid.

**If your system is too large:** If you install a system that's larger than what you need, any excess energy it generates will flow into the grid, and you'll earn generation credits. These credits will be tracked on your account at retail value for use at a different time during the year. At the end of each 12-month cycle, if your system over generated more electricity than you used over the course of the 12-month period, you will receive compensation, using wholesale electricity prices, that can be used to help offset remaining SDG&E charges. Compensation is either in the form of a credit that can be used to help offset remaining SDG&E charges or you can request a check from SDG&E.

**If your system is too small:** If the system you install isn't large enough to meet your energy needs, you'll need more supplemental energy from the grid. Because you're still connected, we'll always be there to provide you with reliable power when your system can't.

## Other Considerations

Your contractor may recommend a system size based on the square footage of your property, but there are other factors that can inform your level of investment, including:

- **Drive an Electric Vehicle?** If you drive a plug-in electric or hybrid vehicle, or think you may in the future, this could affect the size of the system you'll need to meet your charging needs.
- **Got a Pool?** You may want to consider a separate Solar Thermal Energy (STE) system to keep your pool heated.
- **Considering Battery Storage?** As solar storage technology improves, you may choose to invest in a battery to store your excess generation for use when the sun sets.

## READY TO LEARN MORE?

Explore [sdge.com/solar](https://www.sdge.com/solar) for more detailed information all about solar options and alternatives, and to download our Step-by-Step Guide to Going Solar.



[sdge.com/solar](https://www.sdge.com/solar)



P.O. Box 129831 | San Diego, CA 92112-9831 | 1-800-411-7343 | Connect at [sdge.com](https://www.sdge.com)

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