

Got Solar Questions?

We have Answers

1

HOW DO SOLAR PANELS WORK?

The sun hits the solar panels, producing DC (direct current) electricity. We install a component called an inverter that converts the DC (direct current) into AC (alternating current), which is what your home or business runs on. The electricity is then either consumed by your home/business, or fed out on the utility grid to help offset consumption somewhere else. In most places, energy you feed onto the grid generates a credit on your utility bill.

2

I HAVE A 2,500 SQ FT HOUSE. HOW MANY SOLAR PANELS DO I NEED?

We get this question a lot. The size of your home has little to do with how much energy you use. We design solar PV systems around your annual energy consumption. If you can give us actual monthly kWh consumption for one year, we can tell you exactly how many solar panels you need as a starting point.

3

WILL MY SOLAR ARRAY PRODUCE WHAT YOU SAY IT WILL?

Make sure that whichever solar company is giving you a bid, that they stand behind the projections in their proposal. Longhorn Solar does this with a 20 year performance guarantee.

4

IS WIND AN ISSUE? WHAT ABOUT HAIL DAMAGE?

We design solar installations in such a way as to avoid introducing wind loads into the equation, so wind is a non-issue. Solar panels are much more resistant to hail than your roof is. While hail certainly could (and has) damaged solar panels, it's extremely rare for it to happen. We have over 50,000 solar panels in operation today, and less than 30 have been damaged by hail. Most of those were damaged in a single major hail event in San Antonio that had an average hail stone size of over 3" in diameter. When it occurs, hail damage is covered under the claim you will already be filing to replace your roof and any other damage from the storm.

5

WHAT DO I DO ABOUT MY HOA?

Nothing- the state did it for you! It called HB362 and was passed in 2011. While there are certain guidelines that must be adhered to, solar is not something your HOA can prevent you from installing. There is a carve out in the law for new developments still under developer control, but if you have an HOA in place, you're good to go.



6

WHAT REBATES ARE AVAILABLE? WHAT'S THE FEDERAL TAX CREDIT I KEEP HEARING ABOUT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

We can tell you if your utility has a solar rebate or not. If they don't, we will work with you on pricing to make solar as affordable as possible. Regardless of whether or not you have a solar rebate, you can take advantage of the Solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC). The ITC is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in your income tax liability, based on your out-of-pocket investment. The current ITC is set at 30% of what you pay out-of-pocket.



7

HOW LONG DO SOLAR PANELS LAST?

What you're probably wondering is how long your system will produce energy. We warranty our installations for 25 years, but most solar installations will last well into the 30-40 year range if properly maintained.



8

CAN I FINANCE?

Yes, you can. There are lots of options here, including traditional products like Home Equity Loans and HELOCs. There are also financing products we offer in-house that are specifically designed for solar buyers. You can go solar with no money down. The monthly payments can be lower than the monthly savings from solar, meaning you are cashflow positive from Day 1, which is typically what people are looking for when they seek financing! Our finance products don't require lengthy approval processes or appraisals. You can go solar fast so your savings start as soon as we finish your installation.



9

WILL MY SOLAR PANELS WORK DURING A POWER OUTAGE?

No. Grid-tied solar systems are required to shut down in the event of a power outage. This is a safety precaution put in place to protect utility personnel who might be working in your area from the threat of electrocution. Your home's solar system produces a lot of electricity - electricity that will travel out onto the grid if your home does not need it. This energy could easily harm a utility worker if they were working in close proximity to an active solar-powered home, if this safety measure were not in place.



10

HOW LONG BEFORE MY SYSTEM PAYS FOR ITSELF?

It depends on whether or not you can take advantage of a utility rebate (and how much that rebate is). Typical ROIs in central Texas range from 7-9 years with a utility rebate, 10-12 without a rebate, or when you sell your house.

11

SO YOU'RE SAYING SOLAR WILL INCREASE MY RESALE VALUE?

Yes! There is a newly approved tool on the market that appraisers are using to accurately and consistently assess the value of a rooftop solar PV system. You will see that in almost all cases, the added value you receive on Day 1 is more than your out-of-pocket cost.

Solar is exempt from property tax assessment (Texas Tax Code Section 11.27), meaning they can't raise your property taxes because of your new solar system!

12

TRENDING QUESTION IN 2017

I'M HEARING A LOT ABOUT BATTERY BACKUP LATELY. HOW DOES THAT WORK? IS IT EXPENSIVE?

Battery back for homes has become a hot topic in the last year or so. You might also hear it called an "AC Coupled System" or "Energy Storage Backup." A battery backup system can be coupled with your new solar system to power your home during a power outage, or to provide power during higher cost "Time of Use" billing periods. TOU billing doesn't exist in Texas (yet), but it's coming, and soon!

Battery Backup is expensive, and that's why you don't know anyone who has it yet - but the technology is available today, and the pricing is dropping fast as more and more storage is deployed into the market.

As we all know, power outages happen. Emergency Backup Generators are an economical and powerful alternative to battery storage/battery backup.

Longhorn Solar is proud to install Kohler Generators that are installed outside, run as quiet as your AC, and come on automatically – whether you're there or not. And it all happens within seconds of losing power.

Kohler generators run on propane or natural gas, so you don't have to worry about refueling.

And with remote monitoring, you can view and manage your generator from anywhere



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Ready to speak with an energy consultant?

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