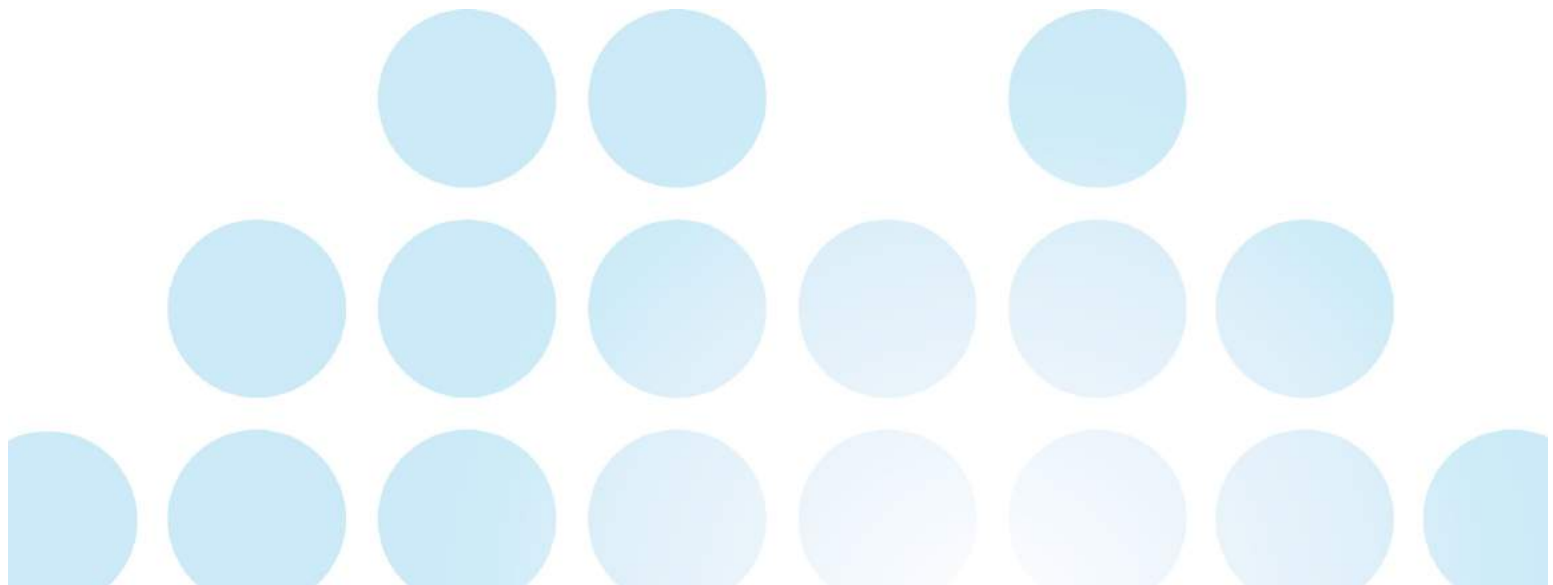


How To Guide: Connecting Your Solar To The Grid



Introduction

Before installing your solar system, Off-Grid Energy must seek approval from your power distribution company to connect the system to the electricity grid.

In most cases we complete the appropriate paperwork and lodge the application on your behalf. We require an electricity bill and rates notice to complete this paperwork.

Off-Grid Energy will also arrange the paperwork required for your distribution company to replace or reconfigure the electricity meter and connect your solar system to the grid. The solar system cannot be turned on until the meter has been updated, and the distribution company is responsible for the timeframe in which this happens.

The distribution company will then notify your electricity retailer of the connection, and your electricity account will be updated to include the default feed-in-tariff.

The full connection process can differ from state to state – as detailed below.

Glossary of Terms

Distributor / Distribution Company: The company that owns the electricity network infrastructure in your location.

Retailer: The company that sends you a bill for your electricity usage.

Feed In Tariff: The payment you receive from your retailer for any excess solar energy that is exported into the electricity grid. Amount is usually given in cents per kWh.

Meter: The normal electricity meter (smart, digital, or analog) on your property can't record the amount of energy being exported into the grid from your solar system, and will need to be updated. Some existing meters only need to be reprogrammed, while others need to be replaced. The meter remains the property of, and may only be updated by, your distributor.

PV: Abbreviation of 'Photovoltaic', another name for your solar system.

Embedded Generation System: How most distributors and retailers refer to solar systems installed on domestic or commercial premises that require connection to the electricity grid.

State-By-State Processes

New South Wales

1. **Lodge Approval to Connect to Network Application.**
Before your system can be installed, Off-Grid Energy will lodge on your behalf an application to connect with your distribution company. After your distributor has given notification of approval, and they issue a job number, installation can go ahead. The time taken for approval varies considerably between distributors.
2. **Sign contract with your electricity retailer.**
As a solar customer, you will need to sign a new contract and negotiate a feed-in tariff with your electricity retailer.
3. **System installed.**
Installer completes Certificate of Compliance – Electrical Work (CCEW) and arranges for Level 2 Accredited Service Provider (ASP) to install the meter. Off-Grid Energy provides the job number from the distributor along with CCEW to the ASP.
4. **ASP installs meter and system switched on.**
ASP installs the meter and connects your solar system to grid (you are charged separately for this). ASP completes a Notification of Service Work (NOSW) and submits to distributor along with the CCEW within 2 working days.
5. **Retailer notified.**
On receiving all paperwork from the ASP, the distributor notifies your electricity retailer who will make necessary changes to your electricity account. You should see changes on your next bill.

ACT

1. **Check if building approval is required from ACTPLA.**
Some solar installations require approval from the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) before installation. To check if your PV installation requires approval, visit www.actpla.act.gov.au
2. **Complete a special connection request form.**
A Special Connection Request Form will need to be completed and returned to ActewAGL. Approval must be received before we go ahead with the installation.
3. **Meter change arranged.**
Off-Grid Energy submits a *Request for Service Form* to ActewAGL and books an appointment to install the meter. We can submit this form any time before installation once approval to connect has been given. Note: the meter change

cannot be carried out until the system has been inspected by ACTPLA.

4. Installer informs ACTPLA of electrical work.

Off-Grid Energy contacts the ACTPLA to inform them of the electrical work that is taking place by submitting *Electrical Start of Work Notice*.

5. System installed.

Off-Grid Energy will begin to carry out installation of the PV system – but we cannot complete the work until ACTPLA has inspected and approved the installation and ActewAGL has installed the meter.

6. Off-Grid Energy contacts ACTPLA to arrange inspection.

Off-Grid Energy contacts ACTPLA to arrange inspection work. If the requirements of this inspection are met, ACTPLA will leave an approval sticker in the meter box. ACTPLA will notify ActewAGL of approval. ActewAGL can then make the final electrical connection to the grid.

7. Meter installed.

ActewAGL will meet the Off-Grid Energy on-site to install the appropriate metering arrangement. ActewAGL will notify your electricity retailer of the completion of all electrical work. Retailer will change your tariff accordingly.

8. Solar system completed.

Off-Grid Energy completes and commissions the PV installation. *Certificate of Electrical Safety Form* will be submitted within 14 days of completion of work.

NT

1. Network connection application submitted.

Firstly, contact [NT Power and Water](#) to find out your eligibility and the tariffs that apply. Off-Grid Energy will then submit a *Network Connection Agreement* to NT Power and Water along with:

- a. Power Purchase Agreement
- b. Wiring diagram
- c. Metering fee (around \$546 * for 1-phase, \$750 * for 3-phase)

2. System installed.

Off-Grid Energy submits a Notice of Intention to Work Form, Certificate of Compliance and Commissioning Certificate (Schedule 3) of Network Connection Agreement to NT Power and Water. The Certificate of Compliance will instigate meter change and must be completed within 30 days of installation.

3. Meter change.

Once NT Power and Water has received the Certificate of Compliance, it can take up to 10 working days (or longer in regional areas) for them to install your meter.

*Correct as of Dec 2015

SA

1. **Apply for approval to connect.**

Off-Grid Energy will apply for approval to connect on your behalf by completing the Small Embedded Generator Request Form with SA Power. SA Power will issue an approval number (immediately for under 5kW, within 5 days for over 5kW, and longer for large scale systems). Once approval has been received, installation can go ahead.

2. **Sign contract with electricity retailer.**

You will need to sign a new contract and negotiate a feed-in tariff with your electricity retailer. You will need to satisfy the requirements of the retailer before Off-Grid Energy can go ahead with Step 3.

3. **Arrange meter installation.**

Off-Grid Energy can then submit a Form A to the retailer to have meter installed. On receipt of Form A, the retailer will notify SA Power and authorise installation of meter. How long this takes varies between retailers. Once SA Power receives authorisation, processing takes around 3 days. SA Power will then notify Off-Grid Energy that the meter change can be scheduled. Off-Grid Energy then schedules an appointment with SA Power to install the meter. This can take anywhere from 2-8 weeks, depending on your location.

4. **System installed.**

Off-Grid Energy completes an Electrical Certificate of Compliance and provides copies to you and SA Power.

5. **SA Power installs meter and notifies retailer.**

SA Power installs your meter and then notifies your electricity retailer of the connection. Electricity retailer will make necessary changes to your account and you should see changes on the next bill.

TAS

1. **Apply for approval to connect.**

Off-Grid Energy submits connection application to TasNetworks on your behalf. Once TasNetworks assesses the application and makes sure that it meets the appropriate technical standards and requirements, you will be sent confirmation that your application has been approved.

2. **System installed.**

Off-Grid Energy submits EWR (Electrical Work Request) to your retailer and a Certificate of Compliance to WorkSafe Tasmania

3. **Meter change.**

TasNetworks will match up the Connection Agreement and EWR and fit a new meter within four weeks (20 business days). Once this has been done, Off-Grid Energy will activate your system.

VIC

1. **Network application lodged (if pre-approval required).**
Most Victorian distributors now require pre-approval for all solar PV systems. Check with your distributor and make sure you are aware of the requirements. Your distributor must grant approval before the system is installed.
2. **System installed.**
Off-Grid Energy sends a Certificate of Electrical Safety (CES) to an inspector at Energy Safe Victoria and arranges for an inspection to be carried out. Inspection must be carried out within 10 days of installation. Once CES is returned from inspector and approved, Off-Grid Energy will lodge all forms with your electricity retailer.
3. **Installer sends paperwork to electricity retailer.**
Off-Grid Energy sends CES, EWR and PV Connection Form (if pre-approval was not needed) to your retailer. The retailer will notify distributor to install meter (this can take around 1 week to process).
4. **Meter installed.**
Distributor will arrange for a technician to come and install the new meter. This has to occur within 20 days of receiving notification from your retailer. The cost of this will be charged to you through your electricity retailer. The distributor informs your electricity retailer once meter has been installed and your electricity retailer will make the appropriate changes to your electricity account.
5. **System switched on.**
Once the meter has been installed, confirm with Off-Grid Energy that the system can be switched on. You will see changes on your next electricity bill.

WA

Western Power customers (south-west WA)

1. **Applying to your electricity retailer.**
Off-Grid Energy will contact your electricity retailer on your behalf for approval of your embedded generation system. Once the application is accepted, the retailer will provide Off-Grid Energy with a unique 'Retailer Reference Number' for use on the application to Western Power. For customers whose electricity retailer is Synergy, an email acceptance letter will be provided containing the 'Retailer Reference Number'.
2. **Applying to Western Power for technical approval.**
Off-Grid Energy will then submit an [application for approval to connect embedded generation](#) to Western Power. Western Power will review the application and provide approval if the system meets requirements. Should any application not meet the requirements, Western Power will advise of any

alternative options available, such as a revised system capacity. Upon approval from Western Power, the meter change request will be undertaken, and Western Power will provide an approval letter to Off-Grid Energy. Approval can take within a few days if system is less than 3 kW and a technical review is not required, and approximately 30 days for systems between 3 kW and 30 kW. For larger systems, expect longer.

3. Appropriate metering is installed.

Once the meter change or reprogram has been undertaken, the embedded generation system can be connected to the network Off-Grid Energy.

4. System installed.

Off-Grid Energy must submit an *Energy Safe Preliminary Notice* to Western power within 3 days before carrying out installation. On completion of installation, Off-Grid Energy needs to submit to Western Power a Notice of Completion along with notification of inverter energy system connection. Off-Grid Energy will also provide you with an Electrical Safety Certificate.

5. Changes made to your electricity account.

Upon Western Power receiving paperwork from Off-Grid Energy, they will notify your electricity retailer who will make the according changes to your electricity account.

Horizon customers

1. Contact Horizon Power.

Check with Horizon Power about the Renewable Energy Buyback Scheme (REBS) details and the changes in your tariff. Feed-in tariffs can vary according to your location.

2. Connection approval form submitted to Horizon Power.

Off-Grid Energy will submit to Horizon Power a *Renewable Energy System - Electricity System Connection Application Form*. You and Off-Grid Energy will be informed in writing by Horizon Power on whether it has been approved. This usually takes up to 10 working days.

3. System installed.

Off-Grid Energy must submit a preliminary notice three days prior to system installation. Within three days on completion of installation, Off-Grid Energy needs to submit a completion notice. Off-Grid Energy will also provide you with an Electrical Safety Certificate.

4. Meter installed.

Once they have received the completion notice, Horizon Power will exchange or reconfigure your meter. Timeframes for this vary according to your location.

QLD

1. Network connection application lodged by Off-Grid Energy.

For Energex customers:

Network connection applications for under 5kW are approved straight away. Allow at least 5 weeks for systems over 5kW, and longer for over 30kW. By electing to expedite the connection application process, you will not need to sign to accept the offer. However, you will need to wait for confirmation from Energex before the installation can go ahead.

For Ergon customers:

Network connection applications for under 5kW and do not require a technical review are approved within 2 weeks. Depending on your local network, a technical review may need to be carried out on any sized system. Systems over 5kW and/or requiring a technical review can take 5 weeks to process. For larger systems this time frame may be longer. On approval, Ergon will send an IES agreement that must be signed by you and returned to Ergon. Once you have returned your IES, the installation can go ahead.

2. System installed and paperwork lodged.

Off-Grid Energy completes EWR form (Energex) / Form A (Ergon) within 5 working days of installation and lodges with the distributor.

3. Service order request made from distributor to electricity retailer.

Distributor sends a copy of EWR / Form A your electricity retailer, and instigates a Business-to-Business (B2B) Service Order Request for meter installation. This usually takes a couple of days to be generated by the retailer.

4. Meter installed.

Once distributor has connection application, EWR and B2B, they will carry out the meter change and complete safety inspection. For Energex customers, this happens within 10 working days. For Ergon, it may take up to 8 weeks.

5. System switched on.

After the new meter has been installed, your distributor will notify your electricity retailer and you will see changes on your next bill. You will need to contact Off-Grid Energy to confirm the system is ready to be switched on.

This information has been taken from the Clean Energy Council website:

<https://www.solaraccreditation.com.au/consumers/small-scale-generation-connection.html>