

Solar energy to-do list



Use Energy Wisely

Before investing in solar panels, you should know your current energy habits. Are you using energy efficiently? What can you do to cut back or make your home more energy efficient? West Florida Electric Cooperative recommends answering these questions before going solar. It's not wise to make a large investment in a solar energy system only to waste it with inefficient windows, doors, appliances or heating and air conditioning.

Ask Questions

Before hiring a contractor, ask yourself these questions:

1. Do you want a system that will provide all your power needs or just supplemental energy generation?
2. How long do you plan to live in this house?
3. How old is your roof?
4. How much are you willing to spend?

Do Your Homework

When you talk to potential contractors, find out how much the system will cost and if there are state or federal tax credits that can reduce your out-of-pocket costs. You can find information specific to Florida by visiting <http://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program/maps>.

Find out:

- How much energy the system will generate.
- How much it will cost per kilowatt-hour (kWh) – then compare that with your current cost from WFECC
- How long it will take to recoup your investment.
- What the contractor's policies are for upkeep and warranty.
- What other people say about them. Check at least three references.
- How much will WFECC pay for the excess electricity you generate?

Contact the Experts

Before any work begins, contact the energy experts at WFECC We'll walk you through the process of connecting a solar energy system to our power grid, including specific safety and functional criteria. We will guide you through the process and answer questions about renewable energy and your specific needs.