



Dangers of attaching solar panels

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Solar energy is a rapidly growing market, which should be good news for the environment. Unfortunately there's a catch. The replacement rate of solar panels is faster than expected and given the current very high recycling costs, there's a real danger that all used panels will go straight to landfill (along with equally hard-to-recycle wind turbines). Regulators and industry players need to start improving the economics and scale of recycling capabilities before the avalanche of solar panels hits.

It's sunny times for solar power. In the U.S., home installations of solar panels have fully rebounded from the Covid slump, with analysts predicting more than 19 gigawatts of total capacity installed, compared to 13 gigawatts at the close of 2019. Over the next 10 years, that number may quadruple, according to industry research data. And that's not even taking into consideration the further impact of possible new regulations and incentives launched by the green-friendly Biden administration.

As subject matter experts, we provide only objective information. We design every article to provide you with deeply-researched, factual, useful information so that you can make informed home electrification and financial decisions. We have:

Incorporated third-party data and information from primary sources, government agencies, educational institutions, peer-reviewed research, or well-researched nonprofit organizations.

We won't charge you anything to get quotes through our marketplace. Instead, installers and other service providers pay us a small fee to participate after we vet them for reliability and suitability. To learn more, read about how we make money, our Dispute Resolution Service, and our Editorial Guidelines.

As with any electrical appliance, solar panels can be at risk of electrical damage and dangers, such as panel fires and power surges. Luckily, plenty of measures are in place to ensure your solar panel installation is safe. This article will discuss some of the common safety concerns around solar panels and what mechanisms are in place to prevent dangerous solar panel scenarios.

For the vast majority of homeowners, solar panels should not be cause for any safety concerns. Solar panels are essentially an additional electrical appliance in your home. They should be considered similarly to refrigerators and air conditioners regarding the danger they bring to your home.

Solar panels involve flowing electricity like microwaves, toaster ovens, house lights, or other common electrical appliances. As electricity is generated and moves through wires around your panels and into your home, problems may occasionally. The two most common safety concerns around solar panels, electrical surges and fires, are typical of other electrical systems.

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An electrical surge happens when higher-than-normal voltages flow through electrical wires. Depending on the surge's voltage and duration, it can damage devices not designed to handle high voltage levels.

External factors like regional power usage drops and nearby lightning strikes can cause electrical surges. It can also result from sources inside the home, such as turning on large appliances like refrigerators and air conditioners. Importantly, internally-caused surges often stem from faulty wiring and can be prevented by ensuring your home's electrical systems are up to date.

Solar panel fires usually arise as a result of electrical problems. Like any electrical device, an electrical fire can be started if wires are damaged, improperly insulated, or otherwise incorrectly installed.

The most common area for solar panels to cause electrical fires is at your system's combiner box, where wires from all your panels connect before flowing through an inverter.

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