# Grid tied vs hybrid solar

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There are three types of solar panel systems: grid-tied (on-grid), off-grid, and hybrid solar systems. Each type of system has a unique setup that affects what equipment is used, the complexity of installation, and, most crucially, your potential costs and savings.

Hybrid solar systems combine features of both grid-tied and off-grid systems. They are connected to the utility grid but also include a BESS for added energy independence. These systems generally cost more because you have to buy the panels, the inverter, the two-way meter, a bank of batteries to store energy, and some means of either manually ...

Hybrid solar systems are both grid-tied and storage-ready. Most solar system owners should choose a grid-tied solar system because it"s typically the most cost-effective. You may go off-grid if you live in a remote area, don"t consume much electricity, and have the capital to invest in a complete home storage backup system.

Solar power is more affordable than ever, making it an attractive option for many homeowners. If you"re considering installing solar power in your home (and you should, as it"s one of the most efficient and environmentally friendly power sources available anywhere), you may be wondering what type of solar system to choose.

A grid-tied solar system is dependent upon your municipality"s electrical grid. The DC electricity generated by the photovoltaic (PV) panels is sent through a grid-tied inverter, which converts it to AC power that"s compatible with the grid.

When purchasing or leasing a grid-tied system, customers sign a net metering contract with the utility company. The terms of these contracts vary widely by state, but they basically determine the price of installing a power meter that supports net metering (two-way power metering) and the price of electricity fed into the grid.

A common misconception of grid-tied solar systems is that the electricity is fed through your home first, and any excess is sold to the electric company. This is true in some localities, but electric companies in many states like Michigan have actively lobbied to change these rules.

The reality is all electricity produced by panels is automatically fed into the electric company"s meter, where it is under the control of the electric company. You have to read the fine print in your specific locality to determine whether you have a net metering or net purchase and sale agreement.

Net purchase and sale -- Under this arrangement, two uni-directional meters are installed: one records electricity drawn from the grid, and the other records excess electricity generated and fed back into the grid.

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You pay retail rate for the electricity you use, and the power provider purchases your excess generation at its avoided cost (wholesale rate). There may be a significant difference between the retail rate you pay and the power provider"s avoided cost.

Even with net-metering agreements, some companies like SRP and APS in Arizona and SCE and PGE in California are finding ways to devalue electricity sold to them while also proposing extra fees to be assessed to solar users. Electric companies across the country are following the footsteps of those in Arizona and California.

Still, grid-tied solar is the cheapest option available, as the PV panels, inverter, and meter (along with fuses, disconnect switches, breakers, grounding equipment and surge protection as required by the local government) are the only equipment necessary.

Those seeking a low-cost, low-maintenance solar option should select grid-tied solar, which, in California, costs an average of $5.27 per watt for systems below 10 kWh and $4.37 per watt for systems above 10kWh according to the state"s consumer price index. Leasing equipment will push the price higher, while purchasing equipment can push the price below $3.00 per watt.

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