



# On off grid system power hybrid solar system panels

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Jason Svarc is an accredited solar and battery specialist who has been designing and installing solar and battery systems for over a decade. He is also a qualified engineer and taught the off-grid solar design course at Swinburne University (Tafe). Having designed and commissioned hundreds of solar systems for households and businesses, he has gained vast experience and knowledge of what is required to build quality, reliable, high-performance solar power systems.

If the solar panels generate more electricity than a home needs, the excess is sent to the grid. In some places, a utility will purchase the solar energy sent to the grid in the form of a bill credit to offset future electricity costs thanks to a billing structure called net metering.

Grid-tied solar panel systems are so popular because they provide the best value for how much they cost, especially in areas with full-retail net metering. Their cost is low because they require less equipment than other solar system types. However, this also means grid-tied systems can't keep your lights on when the power is out.

An off-grid solar system is a solar panel system that has no connection to the utility grid at all. To keep a house running off-grid, you need solar panels, a significant amount of battery storage, and usually another backup power source, like a gas-powered generator.

Believe it or not, there are plenty of places throughout the country that the utility grid doesn't service. Off-grid systems give these remote areas access to electricity. Being off-grid also makes you more self-reliant; you're not beholden to a utility company, and the power is in your hands.

But, off-grid systems are very expensive. You need a lot of battery storage to power an entire home without help from the grid, and the cost adds up. Going off-grid also requires certain lifestyle changes. You have to be very energy-conscious when you don't have a grid with unlimited supply. Off-grid homeowners need to monitor their consumption and solar production to ensure they have the electricity needed.

Hybrid solar systems combine the best of grid-tied and off-grid solar systems; the solar panels are attached to batteries and the utility grid. You'll commonly see hybrid solar systems referred to as "solar-plus-storage" systems.

Solar-plus-storage systems are popular in areas that experience frequent grid failures or in places that don't have full-retail net metering. Without a battery, solar panels can't run your home when the power goes out. Batteries also allow you to rely less on the grid by using stored energy when your solar panels aren't producing electricity. This also maximizes the amount of clean energy your home uses!

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Plus, batteries can even save a bit more money if you don't have access full retail net metering. However, the high upfront cost of batteries means they often don't pencil out financially.

A simple grid-tied system will usually be the best financial choice. Grid-tied systems generally provide the best return on investment because of their low upfront cost and simple system design.

However, there are some cases where a hybrid system may make the most sense for you, especially if you experience regular power outages. If you really value energy independence and maximizing the amount of renewable energy your home uses, then a solar plus storage system could be just what you're looking for.

Off-grid systems are probably the least practical for everyday homeowners. But they are excellent for remote areas and may be the right choice for your mountain cabin.

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