Solar inverter price for home

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If you are already working with a solar installer, most have a short list of inverters they typically like to install, so your options for inverters might be somewhat limited. Which inverter is installed in your home is typically decided by availability and installation size as well as placement of your solar installation (see the article linked above for more information on this).

Even if your installer has shortlisted a few inverters to make it easy for you to choose, or even if they already chose for you, it"s a good idea to know a little the technology and typical solar inverter costs so you know what you are getting and whether it"s a good deal. There are a lot of inverters out there, each with different prices, efficiencies, and warranties, so knowing a little background information will go a long way to helping you make a sound financial decision.

When you receive an estimate from your solar installer, it should include a list of each item included in the installation (panels, inverter, additional hardware, and labor) as well as how much each item costs. If you don"t see an itemized list like this, be sure to ask for it. (And if they can"t or refuse, it"s probably time to look for a different installer.)

If you"ve got the itemized list, great! You know how much they are charging for your inverter. But how much should an inverter cost? Well, we"re here to help!

The good news is that, because of their size, solar installers are able to place huge orders for inverters, solar panels, and all the other associated hardware. This allows them to get the lowest prices possible and typically much cheaper than you or I could find on the internet or in stores.

Each year, the National Renewable Energy Lab performs a cost benchmark of the solar industry, looking at average installation costs, inverter and panel costs, and a host of other related topics. In early 2016 (the latest report available), they found that solar inverters usually cost around $0.18 per watt, though they range from a high of about $0.27 to a low of $0.09.

At the average $0.18 per watt and with the average installation costing $2.93 per watt, inverters usually account for about 6% of total installation costs. This means that a typical 5.6-kilowatt installation costs $16,408 in total and the inverter should account for about $1,000 of that. If your inverter was on the higher end – say $0.27 per watt (about 9% of total cost) – your inverter would cost about $1,500.

Quick Tip: Larger solar installations require larger, more expensive inverters (and vise-versa). However, you can quickly calculate if your installer is grossly overcharging (or undercharging) you by multiplying your installation size (in watts, ie 5600 watts) by the average inverter cost ($0.18/watt). This will give you a benchmark to compare your own inverter cost to. So, for example, an inverter for a 10 kW installation should

cost around $1,800. For a 17 kW installation, the inverter should cost around $3,060.

If your inverter accounts for more than 8% to 9% of your total installation cost, be sure to talk to your installer to see what"s going on. It"s possible that they"ve streamlined their sales or installation process, so instead of the inverter being too expensive, it"s just the opposite and their other installation costs (labor, panels, etc) are just lower than others. In this case, the inverter"s higher percentage of the total cost is actually good news for you (if they"re still installing quality equipment).

How much you spend, of course, depends on the manufacturer and the size, efficiency, warranty, and brand recognition. Here are cost highlights for 5,000-watt inverters from four of the biggest inverter manufacturers in the US:

As you can see, even the cheapest inverters are higher than the 6% average above. Any products -no matter what kind- are always going to be more expensive when sold directly to the public.

If you are installing yourself, you likely aren"t going to save money on equipment, but rather by avoiding paying for all the "soft costs" installers sneak into your total installation cost: labor, sales, and marketing, operations expenses, real estate rentals, etc. By avoiding those costs, you"ll save quite a pretty penny.

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