



Selecting A Solar Installer

The Power Pack program maintains an approved list of trained Solar Electric Installers that meet or exceed the MREA qualification standards for experience and credentialing. The list of installers can be found on the GrowSolar.org website: <http://www.growsolar.org/power-pack-program/how-to-find-an-installer/>

The North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) maintains an approved list of trained and certified solar installers. Check out the list on their locator map at this link: <http://www.nabcep.org/installer-locator>

A number of installers are also members of the MREA, and many have participated or even taught courses for MREA. Visit the MREA Business Member Directory at www.midwestrenew.org/businessdirectory.

How do I know my installer is qualified?

National certifications show an advanced level of knowledge for solar installers such as:

- NABCEP certified (North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners). This national certification requires coursework through accredited training programs, designing and installing a specified number of solar installs, and passing a professional technical exam. You can search for NABCEP certified installers on NABCEP [website](#).
- UL Photovoltaic (PV) System Installation Certification. Installers receive the PV System Installer Certification by passing an exam that is intended to measure the necessary competencies, safety training and several years of hands-on experience in the field.
- Electronics Technicians Association Photovoltaic Installer Certification. This certification involves an in-depth program with apprenticeship and exam requirements.

Questions to Ask a Solar Installer

Asking good questions **BEFORE** committing to buy a solar electric system helps protect you from potential hazards and liabilities associated with having a Solar Energy system installed on your building or home. Use the following questions to ask a Solar Energy Contractor **prior to** committing to buying a solar electric system.

After these questions are answered to your satisfaction, be sure to mention that no work shall begin until the permit is on site and all documentation has been delivered and reviewed. If pre-payment is requested, hold the final amount until all expectations have been met.

- **What qualifications do you or employees have that ensures a quality install?**
 - Nationally recognized Installer Certifications (i.e. NABCEP, UL)
 - Prior documenting experience with system(s) desired
 - Contracting License, Liability Insurance
 - How long have they been in the Renewable Energy Business

- **Does your company hold an Electrical Contracting License or do you hire out?**
 - Provide name of Licensee and type of license
 - Will installing this system void any roof warranties associated with my building?
 - List of precautions taken, products used and statements from manufacturer's compliance with roofing standards

- **What is the expected output and who is responsible if expectations are not met?**
 - Output predictions based on site conditions and statement regarding liability

- **What is the warranty period of this install?**
 - Product warranty information and construction and statement regarding liability
 - The MREA Power Pack program requires a 5-year warranty from installers on all residential installations

- **Who is responsible for the Interconnection and Incentive documents for this system?**
 - Name of staff person who will prepare these and other incentive paperwork

- **For a Solar Electric System, what is the Dollar per Watt on this proposal?**
 - Some incentive programs have caps based on Dollars per Installed Watt

- **Other questions to consider:**
 - Can you provide references from previous customers with similar systems?
 - When will you be able to perform the work? How long will it take to finish?
 - Have you worked with local building officials and utility reps when installing similar systems in the past?
 - Do you repair systems that you installed, and if so, what are your rates?
 - What kind of training will you provide me with so that I can better operate and maintain my system?

Getting An Estimate

It is best to get more than one installation estimate. A good estimate should include the cost of hardware, shipping, installation, connection to the utility grid, travel, and sales tax. As is true for many things, remember that the lowest price may not always be the best price.