



Solar Buyer Checklist

Introduction

What you have here is a straightforward guide to help you stay in charge of your solar buying process and encourage you to do the right research along the way.

The purpose of this checklist is to serve as a quick glance, easy to use tool that helps ensure you are on the right track with your potential solar project purchase. It is more focused on empowering you to make an educated decision than telling you what to do. The checklist is useful for both prospective customers and solar installers/contractors. It will help facilitate reasonable expectations for both parties. An educated customer can go through the purchasing process more quickly and be a more satisfied customer in the long term. This benefits the sales cycle, customer reviews for solar contractors.

Keep in mind not all line items in this list will be applicable to every project, and there may be other things to consider regarding your specific project. Also, we don't expect customers to complete this form on their own unless you choose to do so. A lot of these questions can be answered by your tentative contractor. Your solar project will involve several aspects and steps. This guide will point out those aspects and steps and encourage you to garner a comfortable understanding of each one. To be clear, we're not advising you to become an expert, but you should be comfortable with the investment you're making. This guide can help with that.

Let's get started!

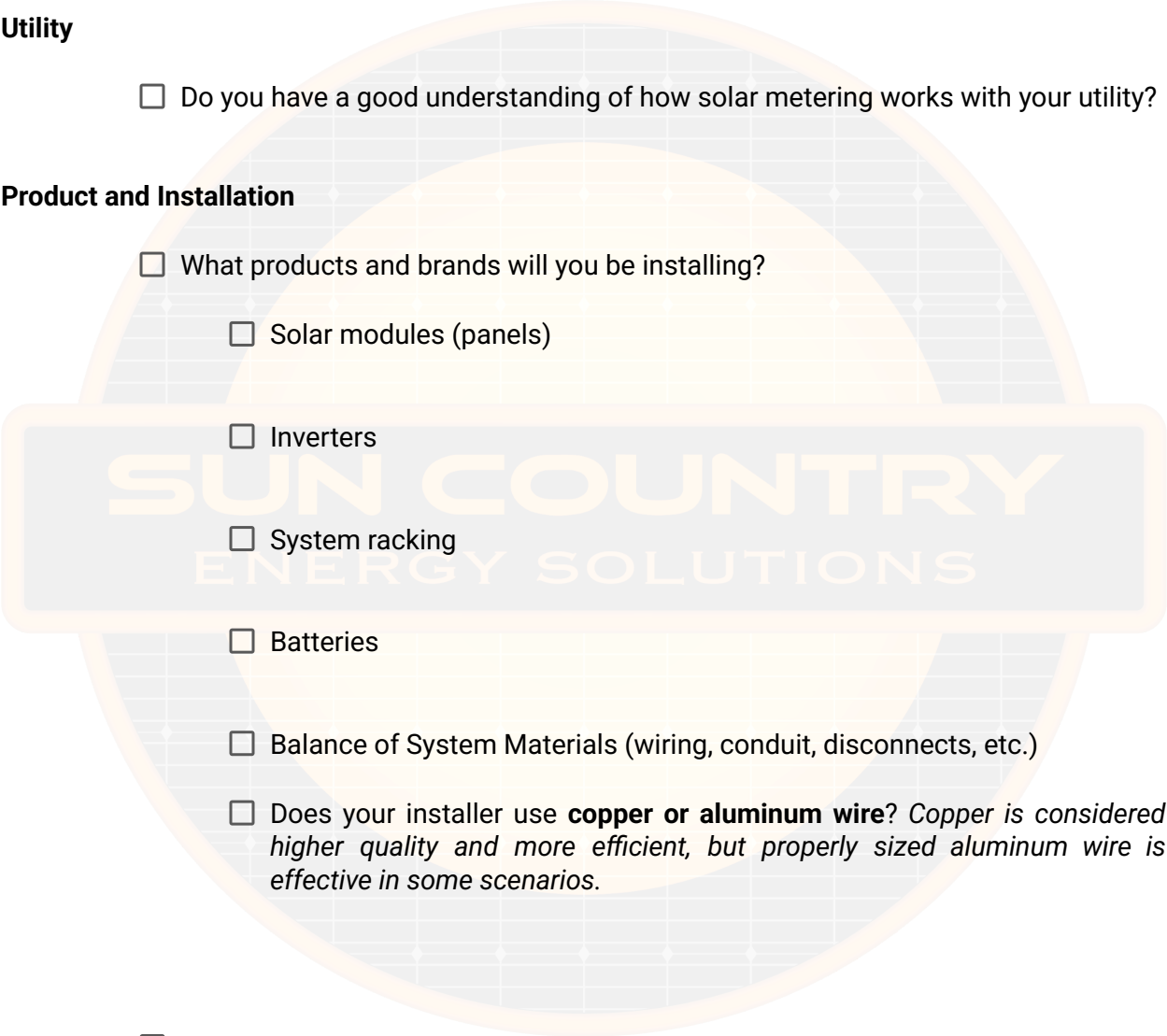
One of the first things to be aware of is , when you make the decision to go solar, you're not just buying a solar energy system, you're investing in one. Your investment should have an expected return, financially or otherwise, along with long-term benefits.

Preliminary Questions

- ☐ What objectives do you hope to accomplish by investing in solar?
- ☐ What do you need/want solar to do for you?
- ☐ Are you a good match financially for solar? *There are many ways to pay for your solar electric system including cash, loans and leases. If financing, you may want to consider your credit score and look for options that are available to you based on it.*

Initial Site Analysis and Considerations

- ☐ Is your property a good match for solar?
- ☐ If you're planning on putting your solar panels on your roof, is your roof in good enough shape for the panels to be installed?
- ☐ Have you checked that the area you'll be putting your solar panels in will be in **full sun**? Some shade is not a deal breaker, but it should be part of the conversation and you should understand how it will impact the performance of the system.
- ☐ How old is your home's electrical setup? Is it a good match for solar as it is, or does it need upgrades first?

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- ☐ Has your prospective contractor explained relevant city, utility, or code requirements that affect the design and placement of your system? *Code requirements vary from location to location. Your contractor should be able to demonstrate familiarity with either local code or the process of determining local code. Following code and passing inspection is required for your utility company to allow Permission to Operate (PTO) your solar energy system.*

Utility

- ☐ Do you have a good understanding of how solar metering works with your utility?

Product and Installation

- ☐ What products and brands will you be installing?
- ☐ Solar modules (panels)
 - ☐ Inverters
 - ☐ System racking
 - ☐ Batteries
 - ☐ Balance of System Materials (wiring, conduit, disconnects, etc.)
 - ☐ Does your installer use **copper or aluminum wire**? *Copper is considered higher quality and more efficient, but properly sized aluminum wire is effective in some scenarios.*
- ☐ Who will be completing the electrical work on your project? *Keep in mind there is a difference between solar work and electrical work. A qualified individual should be completing each aspect of the project.*

- ☐ Has your prospective installer shown pictures and details of previous installations they've done?

Energy and Financial Projections

- ☐ Do you understand how solar financial projections/future savings are calculated?
- ☐ Do you understand how energy production for solar energy systems is calculated?

Financing

- ☐ Are you planning to pay cash, lease or take out a loan for your system?
- ☐ If taking out a loan, do you understand the terms and conditions?
- ☐ When is your first payment due for your loan? Make sure your first payment is not due until after your system has been given permission to operate (PTO) from the utility. This helps you avoid a situation where an install is hung up for one reason or another and your loan payments come due while you're still paying a hefty electric bill.
- ☐ Does your loan transfer to a new homeowner if you move or does it have to be paid off?

Financial Incentives

- ☐ Do you understand what tax benefits may be applicable to you with your solar purchase?
- ☐ Are any additional rebates available to you, such as utility rebates?

General

- ☐ Have you talked with your homeowners insurance provider about going solar?
- ☐ Does your system include access to online monitoring? Is that lifetime monitoring? If it's cellular monitoring, does that cellular plan have an expiration/renewal date?
- ☐ Ask your friends and family if any of them have gone solar.

Before Signing a Contract

- ☐ Has your contractor of choice demonstrated they have an understanding of and helped educate you on the service they're providing you and your objectives?

Notes:

A qualified solar energy consultant should be happy to answer your questions.

We recommend getting at least two to three quotes.

For several reasons, we encourage folks to install battery back-up systems when financially feasible, but if that's not an option today, we encourage you to take advantage of the net metering policies in your area and install a grid-tied solar system if those options make sense for you and your family. **Best wishes on your solar journey! To learn more visit: www.suncountryenergy.com**

