



TIPS FOR

BUYING THE SUN

A member's guide to installing a solar array



**TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

CONSIDERING SOLAR? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

If you are reading this then you are most likely interested in installing a solar unit at your home. We urge you to contact us as soon as you can to inform us of your plans so that preparations can be made for your system, and ensure that you are well-informed about cooperative policies regarding member-owned distributed generation.

I WANT TO INSTALL SOLAR, NOW WHAT?

1. Contact the cooperative as soon as possible.
2. Read the policies and agreements thoroughly. These can be found on our website at www.tricountycoop.com.
Hard copies are available upon request.
3. Member must have a \$1M per occurrence liability insurance policy and provide the certificate of insurance to the cooperative prior to the interconnection.
4. Members with solar units cannot be billed on Rate 7.

SOLAR INSTALLATIONS UNDER 40KW

Members may enter into an interconnection agreement with Tri-County Electric Cooperative if the capacity of their solar unit is under 40 kW. Installations 40 kW and over will work directly with our power supplier, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC).

HOW DOES IT WORK?

EXAMPLE

Member says their system reports that they generated 442 kWhs.

Our bill says that they generated 42 kWhs.

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS

Their solar unit generated 442 kWhs and 400 of them were used immediately before they got to the meter. 42 of their kWhs were NOT used immediately and flowed through the meter to our power lines. The 42 kWhs show up on our bill because the meter senses 42 kWhs flowing from the member's system to the power lines.

VALUE TO MEMBER

Member has offset their use by 400 kWhs generated and used immediately by their home.

There will be a line item on the bill purchasing the 42 kWhs from the member at the energy rate that we pay our power supplier, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative.

442 kWh total generated in bill cycle

(Does not show up on bill or go through meter)

400 kWh used immediately by home

(Does not show up on bill or go through meter)

42 kWh not used by home, flows through meter

(Credit to member on bill for our avoided cost)

Note: if there is a battery in the system, some of the energy will go to charging the battery before getting through the meter.

EXAMPLE BILL

METER	RATE	USAGE
1002	11	1120 KWH
1002	SOLAR	150 KWH
SERVICE AVAILABILITY		
KWH CHARGE	1000 KWH @ 0.107	\$45.00
KWH CHARGE	120 KWH @ 0.0864	\$107.00
KWH SOLD	150 KWH @ -0.0363	\$10.37
		(\$5.45) CR
TOTAL CURRENT BILL		\$156.92

Amount of kWh that member used from the grid, charged at the retail amount.

Excess generation produced by solar is compensated in the form of a credit on the bill.

**This example does not include applicable taxes, fees, or wholesale power cost adjustments..*

Selling Excess Generation

If you sell excess generation during the billing period, the cooperative will calculate a monetary credit for any metered excess kilowatt-hours at a rate equal to the per-kilowatt-hour energy charge from our power supplier, and apply the credit against the electric energy charges (as seen above).

Carryover

The cooperative shall continue to carry over any unused credit until all credits are used.

Frequently Asked Questions

I am working with a solar vendor and they have asked for my consumption history, where can I obtain that information?

We recommend that you log into SmartHub, where you can download your bills and obtain your monthly usage reports. Alternatively, you can contact Tri-County Electric Cooperative and we will compile that information for you.

Will TCEC pay me for producing power?

Residential generation systems should be sized to simply offset your own consumption. However, should you over-produce power, TCEC will purchase that energy from you at the energy rate that we would otherwise pay our power supplier, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC), currently 3.63 cents per kilowatt-hour. This is known as an "avoided cost" structure.

If I install solar, I will no longer receive a bill from TCEC, correct?

False. As your generation system will not likely always produce all of the energy that you need, especially when you need it, and because the system itself is likely dependent upon TCEC's grid, you will always be interconnected and billed by TCEC. It is possible that you may occasionally overgenerate enough electricity to have a credit on your monthly bill, but that is uncommon if your array is sized to offset your usage. In addition, unless you have installed energy storage, you will be purchasing energy from the cooperative when your solar system is not producing kilowatt-hours.

Will solar panels provide energy during a power outage?

When interconnected to the grid, solar panels will not be able to provide your home or business with electricity during a power outage unless your system is equipped with energy storage.

To learn more about Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SREC) through the State of Illinois, visit IllinoisShines.com.

For Federal tax credit incentives, visit energy.gov.



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