

Helpful Questions for Solar Shoppers

The following list represents questions that homeowners and others considering installing solar can pose to potential installers. The questions were compiled from the expertise and industry experience of several Solar Washington members and pertain mainly to solar photovoltaic (PV) systems.

1. How many years has your company been installing solar?
2. How many projects have you installed in WA State?
3. What is your General and Electrical Contractor License Numbers? Do you subcontract any of the work, and if so, what are their License Numbers?
4. Do you have a list of references that we could speak to who have installed the specific products that you are proposing?
5. Does your team have any additional solar certifications such as NABCEP or Product Specific Certifications?
6. Explain the differences between the two available Made-in-WA Solar Panel Manufacturers and any out-of-state panel manufacturers that you may recommend and why you might choose one over the other.
7. Explain the differences between both in-state and out-of-state grid-tie central inverter systems, grid-tie micro-inverter systems, grid-tied battery backed-up systems and why you are recommending the specific product that you are recommending.
8. Explain the difference between the Material/Workmanship Warranty and the Production Warranty on the Solar Panel you are proposing.
9. Explain the details of the inverter warranty on the systems you are proposing.
10. What is your company warranty for the installation of the system and the connections to the roof?
11. How will the system be connected to the roof? What steps will you take to waterproof the connections?
12. Where specifically will the system be laid out on the roof/property?
13. What specific additional fees could there be that are not included in the proposal?
14. What tools/methods do you use for estimating the solar production? What is the expected variation from the estimated production and do you warranty the estimate?
15. Did the contractor get on the roof and take both measurements and the solar shading analysis, or was it done remotely either from the ground or over the internet?
16. Are you a pre-certified contractor with our utility if they have this program? (PSE, SnoPUD, Seattle City Light, etc.)
17. What is the plan for getting the wiring from the roof to the panel location? Will it be in the attic or walls, or will it be externally mounted?