

Residential Storage FAQ

Update 11/11/2013

1. What does the battery product do?

SolarCity's Energy Storage product enables you to run efficient refrigerator and minimal lights for a week or power your critical circuits indefinitely if you have a PV system.

2. Does this mean I can go totally off-grid?

No, you will still be connected to the grid most of the time but it will give you the independence to function when the grid is down.

3. Can I back up my whole house?

No, the system only provides backup to certain circuits in your home. Most customers are able to back up between 2 and 6 breakers.

4. How long will my backup last?

It all depends on what you try to power with it; it will run an energy efficiency refrigerator and minimal lights and cell phones for a week without needing a recharge. If you have solar, the battery can recharge each day when the sun is up so you can run a few more loads. Things that will drain your battery very quickly include: electric space heaters, electric stoves, hair dryers, large televisions, etc.

5. Will having a battery mean that my PV system will work when the grid is down?

Yes. The battery system enables your PV system to safely operate when the grid is down.

6. Is the battery like a car battery?

The technology in our systems is more like a larger version of the battery that is in a laptop or a smaller version of what's in a Tesla. It's a lithium ion battery pack which makes it: safer, longer lasting, smaller/lighter, and easier to use than traditional lead acid batteries (like the ones in your car).

7. How big is the system?

In terms of capacity it holds 10kWh of energy and is rated as a 5kW system.

In terms of physical space the installation requires a 48" x 48" mounting area (ideally indoors) and the equipment is around 16" deep.

8. Can it go outside?

The equipment can be mounted outdoors but it requires additional equipment and higher installation fees (\$1800)

9. What happens when the grid goes down?

When the power goes out for all of your neighbors, you should see a very short (almost un-noticeable) flicker but any loads that are backed up will remain on.

10. Can the battery backup life support systems or critical medical devices?

No, this storage system is not medical grade and should not be relied on to support these kinds of critical equipment.

11. How much does it cost?

The system is worth over \$20,000 but we are able to offer it for \$1500 down and \$15 per month for 10 years.

12. Are there adders?

If your installation needs to be outdoors there is an additional \$1800 fee to cover the added cost of the outdoor enclosure. If major construction is needed on your home or electrical system to install other additional fees may apply.

13. Are there escalators?

No, the payment is \$15 per month throughout the whole term of the agreement.

14. Is there a discount if I prepay?

Yes, there is a 5% discount rate to prepay your lease payments.

15. How long is the term of my contract?

Your agreement is for 10 years, at the end of the term you may choose to renew the agreement.

16. How much does the battery degrade over time?

The battery has a warranty that guarantees at least 80% of the capacity through 10 years if you use it only in backup mode and 50% if used for TOU arbitrage.

17. Is the technology safe?

Yes, the battery technology has been extensively tested, is listed to UL standards and has multiple levels of safety systems.

18. How soon will my system be installed?

Installation will not necessarily be at the same times as your PV system but should happen 4-6 months after your agreement is signed.