



Plug in: to using batteries

Now that your battery is up and running, you can store electricity to use later. This step-by-step guide outlines how to make the most of your home battery, what your rights and responsibilities are, and what to do if something goes wrong.

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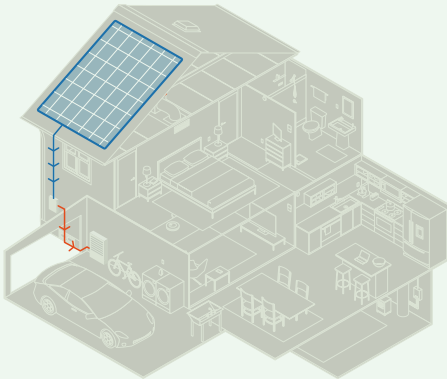
Step one: Using your solar storage system.

How do I use my battery?

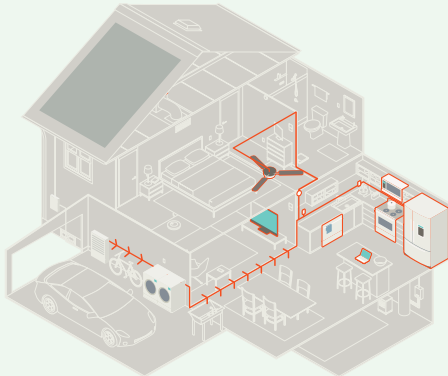
There are a few different ways to set up your battery, and once it's set up it should work by itself. The most common setup is for the battery to store extra energy from your solar panels that you don't need, and use it to power your house when you don't have enough solar power (this could be due to weather or it being night time).

Other ways to set up a battery

- With time-of-use electricity prices, charge the battery from the grid when electricity is cheap and use it (or sell it back to the grid) when it's expensive.
- Join a 'virtual power plant' and be paid to allow it to sometimes use your battery (see our fact sheet on virtual power plants to find out more).



The battery is charged with spare solar power.



The battery is helping to power your house when the solar panels stop producing energy.



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How do I make the most of my battery?



You'll get the most value out of your battery if it is well-sized to your usage – if you have enough spare solar generation to fully charge it most times, and you use enough electricity after solar hours to fully use the battery. A good battery retailer will help you figure out the right size to get.



If you live in an area where power outages are common and your battery is set up to provide backup power, you'll want to make sure you keep it charged enough at times when outages are more likely.

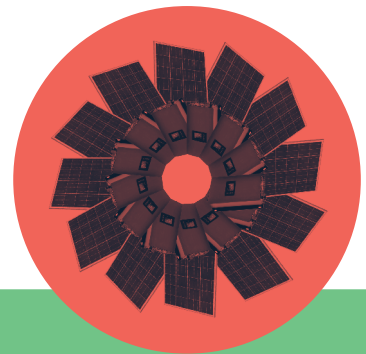


Remember that if you store electricity from your solar panels in a battery, you won't get paid for feeding it into the grid. This can reduce the value of your savings. But if the amount you can feed in is limited, the battery will bring better value.

How can I tell that my battery is working?

Most battery systems have a display that shows how much it is storing or discharging at any time, and how much it has stored for the past day, past week, and so on. If it has a monitoring app, it will also show you what it's doing and how much you have used it.

A good battery installer will have shown you how to read the display and how to use the app.



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Step 2: Battery rights and responsibilities

Australian Consumer Law gives you rights and protections when buying products. These are called consumer guarantees and apply regardless of the product warranties that come with your solar power system components.

One of the consumer guarantees is that a product is 'fit for purpose'. If you have any specific requirements for your battery system (for example, that it stores enough electricity to supply your usual night-time usage) you should tell the battery provider this when asking for a quote so they can tell you whether it is possible and, if it is, install a battery that can provide it. The expected performance of the battery and your typical energy usage must be noted in the quote or contract.



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Consumer guarantees

Products must:

- Be installed compliantly by a suitably licensed (and accredited) person.
- Be of acceptable quality, that is: safe, lasting, with no faults.
- Look acceptable.
- Do all the things someone would normally expect them to do.
- Match descriptions made by the salesperson, the retailer, on packaging and labels, and in promotions or advertising.
- Be fit for the purpose the business told you it would be fit for and for any purpose that you made known to the business before purchasing.
- Not carry any hidden debts or extra charges.
- Meet any extra promises made about performance, condition and quality, such as life time guarantees and money back offers.
- Have spare parts and repair facilities available for a reasonable time after purchase unless you were told otherwise.

Services must:

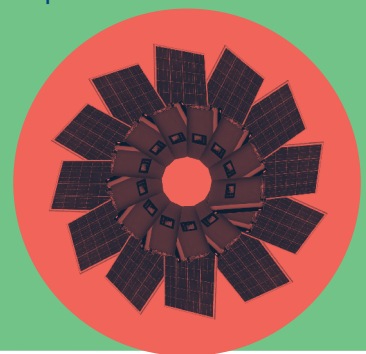
- Be provided with acceptable care and skill or technical knowledge and taking all necessary steps to avoid loss and damage.
- Be fit for the purpose or give the results that you and the business had agreed to.
- Be delivered within a reasonable time when there is no agreed end date.

Your responsibilities

You may be required to get approval from your local electricity network to install and connect a battery, and it may need to meet certain standards that they require. You may also need to register it with the Australian Energy Market Operator.

But your battery installer will take care of this for you and will tell you if there's anything you need to do as part of this process.

If your electricity network or retailer has other requirements of you, they will let you know.



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Step 3: If something goes wrong

What do I do if there's a problem?

Sometimes battery systems don't perform as expected or completely malfunction. This could be due to faulty components or installation errors.

Good installers want happy customers and will do their best to sort out problems as quickly as possible. Providers who are members of a best-practice scheme such as the Approved Solar Retailer scheme are required to have good processes for dealing with faults, problems and complaints. And there are legal protections for customers if manufacturers, retailers, or installers don't do the right thing.

If your battery system seems to have a problem, first contact your installer. A good one will promptly respond to you, figure out the problem and fix or replace it.

If your installer won't help, your state or territory consumer protection agency will give you advice and maybe assistance. Use this list to find yours.

What if my installer isn't around anymore?



If your installer is no longer in business, you may still be okay. Product manufacturers must honour warranties even if the retailer or installer of the product is no longer in business. Find your product information – which will identify the specific model and have contact details for the manufacturer – and contact them. If they won't help, contact your state or territory consumer protection agency for advice.

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Need more? This is one of ten fact sheets to help you with your purchase and use of new energy tech. Check out the others!

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