

JAMUP

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Solar Energy Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



With the increasing popularity and availability of solar energy, Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC) is receiving more and more calls and questions

regarding the subject. SIEC members who wish to explore solar energy should have a basic understanding of how solar works and the processes involved for a solar installation.

Members should know what questions to ask solar installers when obtaining quotes or trying to gain a better understanding. Here are some FAQs that will help you decide if a solar energy installation is right for you.

Q: Does SIEC allow solar interconnections?

A: Yes, SIEC allows interconnections up to 40 kilowatts (kW). For installations above 40 kW, the physical interconnection may still be with SIEC, but the application process must go through SIEC's wholesale power supplier, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC).

Q: What is the process for installing a solar interconnection?

A: SIEC's policies and application process are found on its website at siec.org/interconnection-information. An application must be submitted, along with details and specifications of



the proposed installation. SIEC will review the application. Upon approval, installation may begin. After installation, SIEC will perform a site visit and witness test, and the member will sign the interconnection agreement.

Q: Is there a fee for installing a solar interconnection?

A: Most residential solar installations require a minimum interconnection fee of \$250. For larger systems where SIEC must make changes to its distribution system, additional fees may apply.

Q: Does SIEC install solar systems for the members?

A: SIEC does not install solar. A certified distributed generation installer is recommended. A certified installer will be able to help with the application process and ensure that the system is installed properly. Certified installers can be found on the Illinois Commerce Commission website at icc.illinois.gov/authority/distributed-generation-installer.

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Q: Does SIEC pay me for any energy that is put back on the grid?

A: Yes, SIEC does pay its avoided cost energy amount for any energy that is exported back onto the power grid. If your system generates more energy than it uses at any given time, that energy flows onto the grid. The electric meter will measure both the energy that is consumed and generated. The credit for any excess will show up on your monthly bill.

Q: How is my bill figured with a solar installation?

A: For any energy that is consumed from the grid, you pay the monthly retail rate, facility charge, etc., as you do now. *Janet Manley-McCurley* For any energy exported back onto the grid, you will be credited SIEC's avoided cost on your monthly bill. This avoided cost is based on SIPC's wholesale power cost and is less than the retail rate. This method is called "net-billing."

Q: Why does SIEC not pay me the retail rate for any energy I put back on the grid?

A: SIEC's Board of Directors decided to discontinue the billing method of "net-metering" several years ago. "Net-metering" allows generation of energy to be "banked" or stored for use at another time when the sun is not shining. "Net-metering" was discontinued because under that billing method, all SIEC members subsidize the relatively few solar installations. Because the capacity and energy of a solar installation is not available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week like a power plant, "net-billing" is a fairer method.

Q: Does SIEC have any insurance requirements for a solar installation?

A: SIEC does not require insurance, but its policy states: "It is recommended, but not required that the Member consult legal counsel to determine the Member's potential liability resulting from its interconnection to the Cooperative's facilities, and that any policy issued throughout the

term of this agreement, carry a liability insurance policy issued by a licensed insurance carrier with an A.M. Best rating of B+ or better that provides protection against claims for damages resulting from (i) bodily injury, including wrongful death; and (ii) property damage arising out of the Member's ownership and/or operation of the Distributed Generation facility under this agreement. It is recommended that the limits of such policy be at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence."

Q: Does SIEC require the member to sign a contract or agreement?

A: Because a solar installation is interconnected to SIEC's distribution system, SIEC does require an interconnection agreement to be signed. The installation must meet standard safety requirements. The agreement can be found on SIEC's website at siec.org/interconnection-information.

Q: How do I know if a solar installation is right for me?

A: SIEC recommends that members contact certified distributed generation installers for details regarding a solar installation. Prices vary greatly, so SIEC recommends contacting several installers. The installer should be able to explain what tax incentives, credits and rebates may be available. Please make sure the installer understands how SIEC handles billing, so that a proper feasibility analysis can be performed.

Q: How do I obtain further information?

A: To learn about SIEC's policies visit siec.org/interconnection-information or contact our office at 618-827-3555. To learn more about the State of Illinois-administered incentive program, visit illinoisshines.com. To get specifics on costs for a system and for other specific details, contact a certified distributed generation installer. Certified installers can be found on the Illinois Commerce Commission website at icc.illinois.gov/authority/distributed-generation-installer.



Lineworker's Scholarship

The \$2,000 LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship is awarded to an individual who is related to a rural electric cooperative employee or director in the State of Illinois; or is the son or daughter of an electric cooperative member in Illinois; or is enrolled in the Lincoln Land lineworker's school; or has served or is serving in the U.S. armed forces or **Norman Ellis** National Guard.

The applicant must have a high school diploma or a GED at the time the scholarship is awarded in July. will help pay for costs to attend the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Ill.

Applications must be submitted online or postmarked by April 30, 2023. Visit aiec.coop/lavern-and-nola-lineworkers-scholarship for more information.

Majority of home heating fire deaths involve a space heater or other heating equipment

Heating equipment, such as space heaters, kerosene heaters, fireplaces and wood-burning stoves, is a leading cause of fires in U.S. homes, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The term “homes” includes one- and two-family homes (including manufactured homes), apartments, townhouses and other multi-family dwellings.

During a recent four-year period, local fire departments responded to an estimated average of 48,530 fires involving heating equipment each year. The fires resulted in 500 civilian (non-first-responder) deaths, 1,350 civilian injuries and \$1.1 billion in direct property damage, according to NFPA’s Home Heating Fires report published in 2021.

In addition:

- Heating equipment caused one in seven home fires and 19% of home fire deaths.
- Most home heating fire deaths (81%) included stationary or portable space heaters.
- More than half of the home heating fire deaths were caused by placing heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding.
- Nearly half (48%) of all home heating fires occurred in December, January and February.
- Failure to clean equipment, such as chimney flues, accounted for a quarter of all heating equipment fires.



In addition, approximately two in five home heating equipment fires involved items that ran on what is considered solid fuel, such as wood-burning or pellet stoves or wood-burning fireplaces. However, electric-powered heating devices were responsible for the largest share of losses, accounting for more than half of the fatalities, three in five injuries and two-fifths of the property damage.

Follow these safety tips to use space heaters safely:

1. Read all instructions and use space heaters only as recommended.
2. Do not leave space heaters unattended.
3. Plug them directly into an outlet; most power strips and extension cords are not equipped to handle the energy spikes caused by space heaters cycling on and off.

4. Unplug any other items from the outlet you are using and try to use a dedicated circuit to avoid overload.

5. Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
6. Turn the heaters off before you leave the room or go to sleep.
7. Do not use heaters that are in disrepair or have frayed cords or damaged plugs.
8. Place them on flat, level surfaces and never on furniture, counters or carpet, which can overheat.
9. Unplug and put space heaters away (out of the reach of children) when not in use.

Use space heaters with care. For additional safety tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED MONDAY, JANUARY 16.



Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative
A Challenger Energy Cooperative

Member prize

In this issue of the JAMUP, we printed the names of three SIEC members who are eligible to receive a \$10 credit toward their utility bill. If you find your name printed in this center section and it's not part of the story, call Brent with your account number at **800-762-1400** to claim your prize.

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For Outages Call:
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 618-827-3555
 Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4 p.m.

www.siec.coop



Win a trip to Washington D.C.!

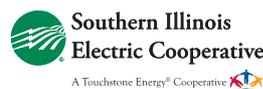
Youth Day 2023

March 29, 2023
 Springfield, Illinois

Get a firsthand look at democracy in action! Meet your elected representatives during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day at the State Capitol, tour the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and win a trip to Washington, D.C.!



Open to all High School Juniors!



Youth Tour 2023

June 16-23, 2023
 Washington, D.C.

SIEC, through the “Youth to Washington” tour, gives two lucky students the chance to spend a week in our nation’s capital visiting historic sites, touring some of our most moving memorials and browsing the campus of our nation’s capital. They will also visit the Supreme Court!

Please contact SIEC Director of Member Services, Brent Goforth, for application or eligibility.

Phone:
 618-827-3555

Email:
bgoforth@siec.org

Applications due
 February 6, 2023.



2022 winners Bennett Neely and Olivia Larrison visit the Capitol during the 2022 Youth Tour to Washington!