

# Solar and Battery Energy Storage Systems FAQ for Contractors

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## General

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### When is the rebate launching?

The rebate will officially be launching on July 23, 2024.

### Where can I find more information about the rebate?

Full details will be available to customers at <http://www.bchydro.com/solarrebate> when we launch the rebate on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. For any industry questions, please reach out to [alliance@bchydro.com](mailto:alliance@bchydro.com).

### You state in the terms and conditions that payment is subject to availability of funds. Does this mean you can cancel the program at any time without warning?

These are standard terms of all rebate offers. Our rebate programs are designed to provide support to the market for efficient products or technologies that have energy or capacity benefits for BC Hydro and its customers. The rebates help encourage the growth and development of new products or efficient technologies and help customers either choose a more efficient option or move forward their purchase in time.

The rebate offer will only change or be taken out of market when the rebates are no longer required to make a difference in the adoption of the product/technology, and/or we can no longer justify the cost of offering rebates based on the economics.

BC Hydro will always seek to provide reasonable notice to customers and industry regarding any changes to the offer or rebates.

### How did you determine the rebate amount and will the rebate amount increase in the future?

There are no plans to increase the rebate amount in the future. The rebates are funded and justified as part of BC Hydro's portfolio of energy efficiency and capacity management programs. Funding for these offers is based on demonstrated financial benefit to the utility and its customers. These programs must provide a positive cost benefit and the funding must be approved within the BC Hydro's Energy Efficiency Plan. Rebate or incentive values for energy management programs are set based on a number of criteria including the cost of the product relative to the incentive, research on the level of incentive needed to encourage customers to invest, cost effectiveness calculations, and available budgets. The solar and battery rebates are not reliant or connected to any Federal program.

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## Eligibility Requirements

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### What are the requirements to qualify for the rebate?

Please refer to the terms and conditions to review the equipment, installation, and property requirements.

**The terms and conditions specify that installations must comply with the 2024 CEC. However, the 2024 CEC does not come into effective until March 4, 2025 for much of the province – at least for TSBC jurisdictions. What do we do between now and March 2025?**

The 2024 CEC updates and clarifies best practices for BESS installations for safety and performance. BC Hydro's product rebates are designed to encourage markets and industry to adopt more efficient products and best practice approaches to product and installation standards. The rebates encourage products and installation practices that are 'beyond the baseline' or minimum expected, which help us justify investment in programs and offers. By encouraging installing to the standards in the 2024 CEC, we're supporting early adoption of best practice approaches for BESS systems. Although the effective date is in early 2025, we expect industry will be transitioning their work practices over the coming year to ensure they are ready to comply. Although permitting or TSBC inspections to these standards will not be requiring until next year, BC Hydro may conduct its own reviews to confirm.

**The most commonly available PV inverters and BESS products do not have listings for all of the required test standards on the list. Please consider how this will be handled, and advise.**

The standards for PV systems listed in the rebate terms reflect the existing requirements under the self-generation (net metering) program. As such, it is our understanding that most commonly available PV systems do meet the requirements. The standards for battery systems were developed with input from our technical team and included a product market scan for compliance. Based on our review, the requirements ensure best practices for safety and product performance and there are many products available that meet the requirements. We will be publishing a list of common battery products for reference with a listing of certifications, that should be a helpful guide for customers and industry seeking to add battery storage systems.

**Battery energy storage systems must be certified to cUL9540 and cUL9540A". UL9540 is a certification for the full BESS (i.e., inverter + battery). UL9540A is not a certification; it is a test standard on the battery only. And it is a test standard for Lithium batteries only. As such, BCH is effectively eliminating lead batteries from the program. Is this intentional?**

Terms have been clarified to read: "Battery energy storage systems must be certified to CUL9540; and Battery energy storage systems intended for installation in the habitable or living space of dwelling units to meet the cell level performance criteria of CUL9540A."

The Canadian Electrical Code and its 2024 amendments has defined rulings requiring that any BESS installed in a residential dwelling must have passed the UL9540A thermal runaway test. Lead acid batteries will be eligible for the rebate if they meet all terms and requirements.

**Do customers need to install solar panels AND a battery energy storage system to qualify?**

Customers can choose to install a battery energy storage system only or solar panels only, or both.

**Do new builds qualify for the rebate? (E.g., homes less than 6 months old)**

Yes, they do. Projects without an assigned meter or customer account, contact us at [self\\_generation@bchydro.com](mailto:self_generation@bchydro.com) with the application number so we can help process the application until the account details are available.

**Does receipt of the rebate commit the customer to accepting utility intervention of their battery energy storage system (now or in the future)?**

No. Future offers may include this requirement or an option to participate in demand response programs, but it is not part of the current offer.

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## Application Process

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### How do my customers apply for the rebate?

Customers submitting new self-generation (net metering) applications as of the official program launch date on July 23 will apply for the rebate through the existing self-generation (net metering) application process. Customers installing battery energy storage systems only will also apply through the self-generation (net metering) application process as well.

#### *Temporary Rebate Application Process for Solar Installations between June 27<sup>th</sup> and official program launch*

Customers who have submitted self-generation (net metering) applications for solar panels (with or without a battery storage system) between **May 1 to June 26, 2024** and installed eligible equipment **after June 27, 2024** (prior installations don't qualify) can contact us after the system is installed and approved for interconnection at [solarrebates@bchydro.com](mailto:solarrebates@bchydro.com) to request an email with a link to apply for a rebate through our alternative rebate application form.

Customers who have submitted self-generation (net metering) applications for solar panels (with or without a battery storage system) and installed eligible equipment between **June 27 to July 22, 2024** (prior installations don't qualify) will receive an automated email with a link to apply for a rebate manually online in late July.

Application date is based on the date the customer submitted the application to BC Hydro for review. The final paid invoice will be used to identify the completed installation date.

### Are customers who install systems before the program launch date eligible for the rebate?

We will accept rebate applications for eligible solar generation projects (with or without a battery) installed after June 27<sup>th</sup> that have received approval for self-generation (net metering). Self-generation (net metering) applications must have been submitted on or after May 1, 2024. Rebate applications for battery only projects installed prior to program launch are not eligible for the retroactive rebate.

### Can the contractor submit the rebate application for the customers?

No, the rebate application must be submitted by the customer.

After official program launch on July 23, rebate applications will be available when the customer reviews and submits their self-generation (net metering) application via the myHydro online portal. Contractors can start the self-generation (net metering) application for the customer and fill out all the system technical details. Customers who open a draft application created by their contractor will be presented with the option to apply for a rebate for the project if they are eligible.

*For customers who installed systems between June 27<sup>th</sup> and program launch and applied for self-generation (net metering) on/after May 1, 2024, rebate applications will be available by contacting [solarrebates@bchydro.com](mailto:solarrebates@bchydro.com)*

### Why do you have two application processes for the rebate?

We are not able to process rebates for self-generation (net metering) applications already in the system before the official launch date. This will be a temporary solution for some customers who are already in the process of installing solar and battery energy storage systems.

### Are customers pre-approved for the rebate?

Customers are given an estimated rebate amount based on the information provided in the net metering application. Actual rebate amount is confirmed once equipment is installed, all documentation is submitted and their self-generation (net metering) interconnection is approved.

## **Do customers need to do a pre and post energy assessment to qualify for the rebates?**

No, a pre and post energy assessment is not required for our rebates.

## **What is the rebate application process for a property owner with tenants occupying the property?**

There are two different situations to consider:

- 1) *The BC Hydro account for the property is in the name of the property owner*  
In this case, there is no difference to the standard application process. The owner/account holder applies for self-generation and the rebate as usual through the online MyHydro portal.
- 2) *The BC Hydro account for the property is in the name of the tenant*  
In this case, the property owner DOES NOT apply for the rebate in the self-generation application on MyHydro. Instead, the property owner will need to apply for the rebate separately from the self-generation application by contacting [solarrebates@bchydro.com](mailto:solarrebates@bchydro.com) to request a 'Landlord/Developer Rebate Application' form

Note: For situation 2, the self-generation application needs to be connected to the tenant account, since the tenant account is the one connected to the self-generation/net metering rate. In the self-generation application, the customer is asked if they are the registered property owner. If the account holder is a tenant, they will respond 'no' and will be presented with a utility account holder consent, which will give the property owner permission to apply for the rebate separately using the tenants account information via the process outlined above.

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## **Rebate amounts**

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### **Is the rebate allocated in \$1,000 increments or a lower amount?**

Rebate calculation is \$1000/kW, but will not be rounded to the nearest \$1000. For example, a system that is 4.8 kW could receive a rebate up to \$4,800.

### **Can rebates be combined with other funding received from other third-party funders (ie. Greener Homes Grant)?**

Yes, however the total rebate payment when combined with the third-party funding cannot exceed the total project cost (including labour materials).

### **Can customers applying for the Greener Homes Loan program qualify for rebates?**

Yes. These are two separate programs with different requirements, one run by BC Hydro and one run by the Federal Government.

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## **Customer Scenarios**

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### **Can customers get a rebate if they are replacing or adding on to an existing system or components?**

Components added to an existing system are eligible for a rebate. Including for example, batteries added to an existing solar system or expanding solar generation capacity. Replacement of system components without any change of system capacity or size is not eligible for a rebate. Replacement or addition associated with an increase to the size or capacity of the system is eligible for a rebate for the incremental increase in the system size or capacity.

e.g. Replacing a 5 kW solar PV system with a 5 kW solar PV system – not eligible for a rebate  
e.g. Replacing a 5 kW solar PV system with a 8 kW solar PV system or adding 3 kW solar PV system to an existing 5 kW solar PV system – eligible for a rebate for the 3 kW capacity increase

e.g. Replacing a 5 kWh battery with a 5 kWh battery – not eligible for a rebate  
e.g. replacing a 5 kWh battery with a 6 kWh battery – eligible for the 1kWh increase in storage size.

**My customer would like to install solar panels and/or a battery energy storage system in an off-grid home. Do they qualify for the rebate?**

The rebate program is only available for solar and battery energy storage systems connected to the BC Hydro grid.

**My customer has a secondary home they would like to add solar panels on. Are they eligible for the rebate or is it only for primary residences?**

Customers may apply for the rebate for most secondary residences. Please refer to the eligible properties section in the terms and conditions.

**My customer is installing a different renewable energy generator (not solar) that will be connected to net metering. Do they qualify for the rebate?**

Only solar and battery energy storage systems qualify for the rebate.

**Is the rebate applicable for a grid-tied solar system on a garage or secondary suite if the main house is located in a heavily shaded area? All buildings are on the same service.**

To be eligible for the rebate, the system must be set up to serve the primary, occupied residence/building and connected to the primary meter for the account at the site.

For single family homes, rebates are not available for systems that don't serve primary residences, such as garages, outbuildings or secondary suites that are not connected to the same account as the primary, occupied residence.

**Does the Indigenous rebate apply to single family homes on reserve or only Band council accounts?**

Yes, the rebate includes single family homes on reserve for accounts in the name of the occupant.

**If a customer has multiple meters on their property, would they receive a rebate per meter or per property?**

Rebate maximum is per eligible account per property. Separate properties, accounts, and buildings owned by the same person may qualify for a rebate. If a property has multiple meters, each eligible metered account would need to be connected to a separate qualifying system. Sub-metered units, or suites within a multi-unit building do not qualify. Refer to terms and conditions for the complete requirements and limitations.

**If a customer has a detached garage on the same meter as the house, would they be eligible?**

Yes, if the detached garage is attached to the same meter as a house that meets the eligible properties criteria in the terms and conditions, it is eligible. However, detached garages on a separate meter are not eligible.

## **Is a clubhouse for a strata eligible?**

Yes, as long as it is on an eligible rate and meets all other eligibility requirements. See terms and conditions to confirm eligible rates.

## **Will municipalities be eligible?**

Yes, municipal buildings and accounts that meet the program requirements will be eligible. However, larger customers with properties on medium or large commercial and industrial rates (e.g. 15XX or 16XX), should review and consider if they are eligible for BC Hydro's solar and battery incentive offers designed for larger customers. See [Energy storage incentive \(bchydro.com\)](https://www.bchydro.com/energy-storage-incentive) and [Load displacement incentives \(bchydro.com\)](https://www.bchydro.com/load-displacement-incentives). Many large commercial customers (including munis) will have a BC Hydro Key Account Manager or Energy Manager who can help them review and understand which BC Hydro offers are the best fit for their project and situation, and can help the customer optimize their incentives.

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## **Rate and Self-Generation (Net Metering)**

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### **What is the new rate schedule 2289?**

The new rate schedule 2289 for net metering is part of the July 2024 rate design application that was filed with the B.C. Utilities Commission (BCUC). An update will be filed in December that includes a proposal for the transition plan for customers who currently participate in the existing Net Metering Service Rate (1289). BC Hydro services and rates are subject to the BCUC's approval.

More information can be found at [bchydro.com/toolbar/about/strategies-plans-regulatory/rate-design/current-activities.html](https://www.bchydro.com/toolbar/about/strategies-plans-regulatory/rate-design/current-activities.html)

### **Is there any plans to increase the AC KW allowable for net metering?**

Some changes are being considered and you can refer to the rate design application for details.

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## **Other Utilities and Municipalities**

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### **Are FortisBC customers eligible for the rebate?**

FortisBC electric customers are not eligible for the solar and battery rebates offered by BC Hydro. The solar and battery rebates are only available for BC Hydro accounts at eligible properties located in BC Hydro's service territory.

For any questions about FortisBC's programs and offers, please contact FortisBC or visit their website.

### **Would the rebates be eligible for customers who are part of the New Westminster Electric Authority?**

No, City of New Westminster electric utility customers are not eligible for the solar and battery rebates offered by BC Hydro. The solar and battery rebates are only available for BC Hydro accounts at eligible properties located in BC Hydro's service territory.

For any questions about the City of New Westminster electric utility programs and services, please contact the City of New Westminster or visit their website.