

Net Metering Frequently Asked Questions

How does BC Hydro's Net Metering program work?

The objectives of the program are to provide customers with the means to take responsibility for their own power production and to lower their environmental impact. BC Hydro's Net Metering program is designed for customers with small generating facilities, who may sometimes generate more electricity than they require for their own use.

Under the simplest version of net metering, there is a single meter that runs backwards when the generator produces more electricity than the customer requires and runs forward when the generator produces less than the customer requires. Customers are only billed for their positive "net consumption", which is defined as their total consumption minus their total generation in a given billing cycle, as shown by a positive meter reading. Customers who have generated more than they have consumed in a given billing cycle will have their meter run backwards. This amount of electrical energy will be credited to the customer to use in a subsequent billing cycle. At the anniversary date, which is the 12 months following the date that the net metering service is initiated, the customer will be credited for any excess generation at the rate provided for in the Net Metering Rate Schedule of 8.16 cents per kilowatt-hour..

What types of generators are eligible?

Generators fuelled with clean energy with a rated capacity of not more than 50 kilowatts.

What energy sources are "BC Clean"?

BC Clean electricity refers to alternative energy technologies that result in a net environmental improvement relative to existing energy production. Examples may include small/micro hydro, wind, solar, photovoltaic, geothermal, tidal, wave and biomass energy, as well as cogeneration of heat and power, energy from landfill gas and municipal solid waste, fuel cells and efficiency improvements at existing facilities. For more information, please see the BC Government definition of "BC Clean" electricity <http://www.empr.gov.bc.ca/EAED/AEPB/Documents/CleanEnergyJune.pdf>.

Are all customers eligible for net metering?

No. Not all customers are eligible for net metering. To be eligible the generator must be owned by the customer and be located on the customer's premises (or on adjacent premises owned or leased by the customer) and the customer must be taking service under one of the following rates:

- 1101, 1107
- 1200, 1201, 1210, 1211, 1220, 1234, 1255, 1256, 1265, 1266.

Zone II customers taking service under Tariff supplement Special contracts are also eligible provided that BC Hydro is satisfied that the metering, billing and other requirements of the net metering tariff can be met.

The rates above generally include residential customers and commercial and industrial customers supplied by BC Hydro's distribution system.

Can BC Hydro install a small generating system for me?

No, BC Hydro does not design, engineer or install generating systems for its customers. We are also not able to recommend specific contractors or equipment suppliers. BC Hydro encourages its customers to educate themselves with regard to the technology and equipment they may purchase and install, and to determine that their installation will comply with all provincial and local code and zoning requirements. BC Hydro **cannot** allow the interconnection of a generating facility until the customer provides a signed copy of their electrical inspector's final inspection and approval of their installation.

Is there a cost to sign up for net electricity metering?

In most cases, there will be no charge to the customer to sign up for net metering (other than the customer's own costs of setting up, operating and maintaining their generating unit). As noted below, for projects over 5 kW, BC Hydro must undertake a Site Acceptance Verification and there will be a charge to the customer of up to \$600 + GST to cover this.

Do I need a new meter and if so, do I need to pay for it?

To ensure you receive credit for your net generation, BC Hydro will in most cases replace your existing meter with a new one that is capable of measuring electricity flow in both directions, free-of-charge to the customer. In rare circumstances, BC Hydro may require that separate meters be installed to measure your load and generation. If two meters are required, you will have to provide for and pay for the installation of a second meter base.

How do I apply?

Once you have decided to install a generating facility, you need to follow a process to ensure that you have interconnected your equipment with BC Hydro's electric system both legally and safely, and to ensure that you receive all of the benefits of operating such a system.

1. Submit an application to BC Hydro for interconnection with its electric system:
 - Complete the Net Metering Interconnection Application form http://www.bchydro.com/etc/medialib/internet/documents/info/pdf/info_net_metering_interconnection_application_form.Par.0001.File.info_net_metering_interconnection_application_form.pdf
(Please note that this document is solely an application for a contract. Completing it does not authorize you to interconnect your generating facility with BC Hydro's electric system. You must wait until you sign an interconnection agreement with BC Hydro and comply with the terms of such an agreement. You must not interconnect your generating facility until BC Hydro provides you with a letter specifically stating that all of the interconnection requirements have been satisfied and authorizes the interconnection.)
 - Include an "electric single-line-diagram" of the system to be installed, showing the arrangement of the components from the generator to your service entrance main switch.
 - Include a site plan showing house/object outline, street/alley, north arrow, location of BCH revenue meter and DG System Disconnect Means
 - BC Hydro may request additional information from you or your contractor to clarify the details of your installation.
2. Based on the information provided in your application, BC Hydro will complete a technical review. BC Hydro will then prepare and return an Interconnection Agreement for you to sign and return to BC Hydro for its acceptance.
3. You or your contractor may then complete the installation, have it inspected by the appropriate Government Inspector and provide BC Hydro with a signed copy of the inspector's final inspection approval document.
4. BC Hydro will send a Distribution Operating Order (DOO) for you to sign and return, if needed.
5. An appropriate Revenue Meter will be installed, and a special account will be set up for your project.
6. For projects over 5 kW, BC Hydro may undertake a Site Acceptance Verification test, which is to occur after confirmation of the government inspector approval, as mentioned in item 3 above. There will be a charge to the customer of up to \$600 plus GST to cover this.

If it's customer's cause to fail the test, the test will be terminated and the customer will be charged on the actual cost up to \$600+GST. A new test will be done at a new charge up to \$600+GST to the customer.

If it's BC Hydro's cause to fail the test, a new test will be done again free of charge to the customer.

During the test, if any material change from the original application is found, the project will be deemed to be a different one, the test will be terminated and the customer will be charged on the actual cost up to \$600+GST. A new review and a new test are needed, as well as a new test charge up to \$600+GST.

7. You will then receive BC Hydro's written authorization for final interconnection and be eligible to receive the benefits of BC Hydro's Net Metering Tariff.

How long will it take to complete the application process?

It will take a minimum of two weeks, from the time an application is received, to provide the Interconnection Agreement to the customer. Once the signed Interconnection Agreement is received from the customer, it will take a minimum of another four weeks to have the Distribution Operating Order and Final Signoff from BC Hydro.

It is important to note that BC Hydro will attempt to have our work done by the targeted in-service date specified by the customer on the Net Metering Application. Also, the application process timing is dependant on the customer supplying all relevant information as needed.

I am not a BC Hydro customer yet. How can I apply for net metering?

If you are located in an area serviced by another public utility such as Fortis BC, City of New Westminster, City of Nelson etc., please contact the local utility regarding their net metering.

If you are near or within a BC Hydro service area, please apply first for a load connection from the local BC Hydro district office prior to applying for net metering.

Will I need to register with Measurement Canada as a contractor (supplier of energy under The Electricity and Gas Inspection Act)?

No. You are not required to register with Measurement Canada.

How do I find the inspector for my location?

You can contact your local municipal government or British Columbia Safety Authority <http://www.safetyauthority.ca/?q=home>.

How do I know whether the inverter is certified?

The inverter shall be a certified grid-tie inverter according to BC Electrical Code by an organization accredited by the Standards Council of Canada under the *Standards Council of Canada Act*. Examples of such organizations are CSA (Canadian Standard Association) <http://www.csa.ca/Default.asp?language=english> or Underwriters Lab Inc. <http://www.ul.com/>.

How do I find help to install or buy generator like solar PV or wind turbine?

BC Hydro does not involve with any third party commercial business. BC Hydro does not sell or recommend any of the subject equipment, nor provide any consulting or contracting or installing service to net metering customers.

It is suggested that you find a contractor or certified/licensed electrician with at least three successful projects as reference. The contractor shall have liability insurance.

Some examples of renewable energy industry information:

- Natural Resources Canada: The Canadian Renewable Energy Network (CanREN)
<http://canmetenergy-canmetenergie.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/eng/renewables/canren.html>
- CANWEA: Small Wind Turbine Purchasing Guide
<http://www.canwea.ca/images/uploads/File/SmallwindturbinesFINAL.pdf>.
- Canadian Solar Industries Association - www.cansia.ca
- The Solar Guide <http://www.thesolarguide.com/>