



Can amish get solar power

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When most people think of Amish communities, they picture old-fashioned environments free of modern technology. For the most part, that's true, but there are a few surprising exceptions. Many Amish families use solar panels to meet their modest electricity needs, Electric Rate reports.

According to Electric Rate, some Amish communities adopted solar as far back as the '90s.

In addition to wind turbines on churches and barns, Amish homes may also have solar panels on the roofs. These are connected to batteries that power electric lights, water pumps, and even the occasional washing machine, refrigerator, cash register, or e-bike.

Electric Rate explains that Amish communities don't reject all technology for its own sake. Instead, they consider the impact each type of technology will have on their lifestyle and traditions.

Television doesn't have a place in the simple Amish lifestyle, and connecting to the power grid to run multiple appliances would threaten the community's independence and self-reliance.

However, electric lights are another matter, according to Electric Rate. Amish families previously used kerosene lamps or even diesel generators to light their homes. These created major safety issues, like heightened fire risk and toxic fumes.

Solar panels and LED lights were the perfect solutions, Electric Rate says. They're self-contained, so Amish communities don't have to rely on the outside power grid or pay a monthly bill. They don't even have to add wiring to the whole house. Just one or two panels are enough for a whole home since they don't have many electric appliances. The lights themselves are reliable, efficient, long-lasting, affordable, and safe.

Even better, solar technology is getting cheaper all the time. Ongoing breakthroughs in solar panel design have made them easier to manufacture and more efficient to use, opening up this possibility for even more families.

Solar panels are also gentle on the planet. Unlike burning kerosene or diesel, solar doesn't produce air pollution that traps heat in our atmosphere. The more households, businesses, and governments adopt solar, the more we cool down the planet.

A year ago I noticed a stark change while in an Indiana Amish community. Solar panels and spinning wind turbines had populated many an Amish roof in the 5 years since I last visited.

Later, in an Amish-owned store in another settlement, I viewed an array of technologies designed to harness the wind and sun. Amish, at least in some places, are taking up these technologies designed to latch onto the



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forces of nature.

A recent article looks at the first Amish household to adopt solar power in the community at Lyndonville, New York (Orleans County). Jonas Miller may be setting a trend for his community, where the church has officially sanctioned the technology. High diesel prices have driven the change to solar, which will be used to power the lights, cash register and other electrical needs for his general store; in his community of two dozen families.

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