



# Faqs and tips on solar panels maintenance

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### Solar panel maintenance at a glance:

Avoid using abrasive materials or harsh chemicals, as they can scratch or damage the panels.

Solar panels typically don't require much maintenance other than periodic cleaning and keeping them free from obstacles that can cast shadows over the panels. Solar panels need an unobstructed path to the sun to operate optimally.

Solar panels are designed to withstand extreme weather events like hail, snow, ice and wind to provide lasting performance. Solar panels typically have a lifespan of 25 to 30 years with regular maintenance, but should you start to see a dip in their output, it might signal it's time to clean them.

Dirt, debris, dust and other items can dirty solar panels and if the accumulation grows too much, it can start to impact the amount of energy that the solar panels produce. Be sure to turn your solar power system off prior to cleaning. Cleaning solar panels by spraying them down with lukewarm water from a hose usually does the trick. Do not use cleaning agents or soap to clean solar panels because they can leave streaks and damage the panels.

For solar panels with heavier deposits, spraying them down with a lukewarm water from a garden hose and wiping them down with a non-abrasive, microfiber cloth can get them clean. If you clean them while on a roof, remember to do so safely by using a safety harness to prevent falls. If cleaning from a ladder, use caution to prevent falls. Best yet, a telescopic pole with a microfiber cloth attached to it can help you safely clean solar panels from the ground.

**TIP:** Do not clean your solar panels on a sunny day because it can leave smudges since the water can evaporate quickly.

Sometimes snow and ice can accumulate on solar panels but since they're angled, it usually melts and slides off. Should snow or ice persist, spraying panels with lukewarm water can help remove it.

Avoid using hot water to clean snow and ice from solar panels because the temperature discrepancy can cause the panels to crack. You can also brush the panels off with something non-abrasive to prevent scratches.

Solar panels only need maintenance two to four times a year, but check your solar companies manual for panel specific maintenance care. Fall and spring serve as good times to perform maintenance work because panels can need cleaning following winter where dust and debris can accumulate. Fall is also a good time because of



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the falling leaves and other droppings. Beware of other issues like sap from trees and bird droppings.

Checking your solar panels four times a year can help you track the performance of your panels better. You can notice issues sooner and address them faster. You should also inspect wires and connections to ensure they're in working condition. Sometimes critters can gnaw on them without you noticing.

You can also hire a professional to perform an annual inspection if you'd rather have a pro do the job.

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