



The Power of Human Connections



innovation

integrity and safety

environmentally responsible

Renewable Energy Systems Interconnecting with your co-op

Today's changing energy landscape is bringing more attention to renewable energy resources, including wind and solar. Iowa's rural electric cooperatives support generation that is safe, reliable, cost-effective and environmentally responsible.

When considering the installation of a wind generator or solar energy system (also known as photovoltaic (PV) systems) on your property, key issues are **safety, reliability and integrity of the power grid** and **fairness in terms of cost** to other members. Whenever generation is connected to the transmission grid, the safety of cooperative employees, members and the general public must be given top priority. In addition, the member must meet certain requirements to allow your cooperative to maintain the reliability of the power grid and to ensure any associated costs are not imposed on other members.

Before investing in a wind turbine or PV system, or connecting it to the power grid, you should meet with the appropriate cooperative representatives to gain an understanding of the expectations for both the cooperative and member.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative will work with you to establish a written agreement, which will address these expectations as well as each party's responsibilities. The agreement will also cover the terms and conditions of the interconnection, including such things as rates paid for the power you deliver to the grid, insurance and metering requirements.



Recommended process for members

- Step 1** Contact your cooperative to arrange a meeting.
- Step 2** Meet with your cooperative to verbally express intentions.
- Step 3** Work with your cooperative to develop a written agreement.
- Step 4** Proceed as outlined in the written agreement.

Cooperative's Responsibilities

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative is your partner in providing you with safe, reliable electric service, and has requirements in place to address issues of safety, grid integrity and cost fairness. Those requirements (1) protect the safety of members and cooperative employees (2) maintain the integrity and reliability of the grid and (3) ensure cost fairness.

Cooperatives must adhere to all applicable federal and state laws when working with a member to connect renewable energy systems to the grid. A written agreement between the cooperative and the member typically is developed to ensure proper communication and protections are in place prior to connection of the facility to the grid. Consideration must also be given to established requirements for installation, maintenance, metering, switching and liability insurance.



Member's Responsibilities

The general requirements for a member to install and interconnect wind or solar generation include paying for any interconnection devices that are necessary to protect the safety of the cooperative representatives and to maintain the integrity of the delivery system. The member is also expected to carry liability insurance and pay for the necessary metering equipment used to measure kilowatt-hours (kWhs) delivered back to the grid by the member.

Wind generation systems and solar energy systems use renewable resources - the wind and the sun. Renewable energy systems are most effective when they are part of an energy-efficient home. Purchasing and installing one of these systems can be a significant investment for a member-consumer. Therefore, your Touchstone Energy Cooperatives recommend carefully researching the potential investment, so you make the right decision for your home.

Frequently Asked Questions

What rate will the cooperative pay for kWhs generated from a wind or solar energy system?

The cooperative will purchase excess power the member generates over and above what is consumed. The cooperative will purchase excess power at rates comparable to what the cooperative's power supplier would incur if comparable power were generated by the power supplier or purchased from another source.

Is a renewable energy system worthwhile to build?

Installing your own renewable energy system is an individual decision for each member. Your cooperative's role in this process is to help educate you regarding the cooperative's expectations. We will help you obtain information you deem relevant to your decision-making process. However, the decision is one you must make on your own or with the assistance of consultants.

Which vendors should I work with regarding my wind turbine or solar PV system?

The cooperative does not endorse one particular wind turbine or PV system vendor.

Once you have decided how a renewable energy system will work for you, examine the products and accessories available by contacting one or more vendors to discuss your particular interests and get preliminary cost estimates. Choosing a good dealer is probably just as important as selecting a good renewable energy system because most dealers service what they sell. Dealers should provide you with references. Also, check with the Attorney General and Better Business Bureau. You should also plan to visit a few installed systems near you. This is a good way to become familiar with local dealers and their performance with clients. Don't hesitate to demand excellence and be particular about service and maintenance.

What rebates or other incentives do entities such as the state or federal government have for wind generators?

Incentives can come in the form of tax credits, low-interest loans or other delivery mechanisms. Your tax accountant or tax attorney can advise you about tax credits or other tax incentives relating to the installation of a renewable energy system.

Why do I have to carry \$1 million or \$2 million of liability insurance?

It is very common for businesses and individual homeowners to carry liability policies to insure against losses or claims. You should not view carrying liability insurance on a renewable energy system any differently than the liability insurance on any other personal property. Insurance provides coverage for damages to others and their property. As the owner of the system, you must assume responsibility for insurance coverage.

