CanREA's Go Solar Guide

Glossary of terms

DC / Electricity with a constant positive polarity, the same type of power produced by a common household battery.

AC / Electricity with an alternating polarity, the most commonly used type of power in our homes.

Kilowatt (kW) / A measure of how much energy is being produced. Calculated by multiplying the Voltage and Current values of a system.

Kilowatt peak (kWp) / Used to describe the energy output capability of a solar electric system under ideal solar energy conditions (e.g., during peak times during the middle of the day).

Kilowatt hour (kWh) / The amount of power delivered over a period of one hour.

Voltage / Volts (V) / The "pressure" created by electrons flowing through a system—the greater the pressure, the more power can be transported in an electrical wire.

Ampere / Amps (A) / The measure of how much electrical energy is flowing in an electrical conducting wire.

Inverter(s) / Devices that convert the direct current (DC) electricity generated by the panels into alternating current (AC) for use in your home or for export to the grid.

Modules / Individual solar panels that convert sunlight to electricity. Your system can consist of multiple modules.

Net metering / An agreement where the local utility company credits you for the surplus power produced by your solar system that is not consumed in your home.

Grid tie / A system that is connected to the electrical network. This connection type allows excess power to be sent off site in return for payments/credits from your utility company.

Off grid / Solar generation that is not connected to the electricity distribution system; often associated with remote cabins/properties and is typically a seasonal option or requires batteries and/or a generator.

For more information, see CanREA's Go Solar Guide.