

Spinning Your Meter Backwards

How do I
spin my electric meter backwards?

In 1978,
the "PURPA" (Public Utility Regulatory Policy Act) was signed to allow
organizations other than utilities to produce power (more
Information). This means that if you generate power from any source, the
utilities are required to buy it from you.

Safety is
an issue, of course; you could not build a nuclear power plant in your
backyard, but if you install a UL listed, electrically inspected solar energy
system or wind generation system then the local utility will purchase any power
you generate.

Inverter, Solar Power Disconnect Switch, and Electric Meter

The way it
works is simple.

- The solar panels on your roof generate Direct Current (that's the same kind of electricity you get from a battery.)
- An Inverter, the brains of the system, changes the electricity to Alternating Current. (the type of electricity that comes into your home from the utility grid).
- The inverter is connected to the main circuit-breaker panel in your home.
- When you use electricity, you use the power generated by the solar panels first then, if you need more, you use power coming from the utility. The inverter is responsible for this.
- If you are generating more power with the solar panels than you need, power flows back to the utility -- backwards through your meter.

Different states and utilities have various forms of legislation about this, called 'net metering laws.'

1 - You are not allowed to produce power during a power outage. This could be dangerous to a utility lineman.

2 - You cannot produce more power in a year than you use - in other words the utility will not write you a check. The lowest that your utility bill can be is zero.

3 - You may need to replace your electric meter with one that allows this two-way flow.

[Click here](#)
to see Current Net Metering laws in the United States.

