

Solar-Ready Roof Checklist

Find out whether your roof is ready for solar before an installer tells you it is

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General information for planning purposes. It is not engineering, legal, or financial advice; confirm final decisions with a licensed professional in your area.

Why check the roof first

Panels typically outlast the roof they sit on. Re-roofing under an installed array means removing and reinstalling the system, which can cost a meaningful fraction of the original install. Ten minutes with this checklist can avoid that.

- Work through the five sections with a ladder, a compass app, and your last roof invoice if you have it.
- Anything you cannot verify from the ground should be confirmed by a roofer before you sign a solar contract.

1. Roof age and condition

☐	Roof covering is less than roughly half-way through its expected life (ask the roofer for the rated life of your material)
☐	No visible curling, cracking, missing shingles, or moss build-up
☐	No known leaks in the last three years
☐	Attic shows no water staining, daylight, or sagging decking
☐	Flashing around vents and chimneys is intact

Roof material	
Year installed (or best estimate)	
Last inspection date	

2. Orientation, pitch, and shade

Production depends on where the panels face and what shades them. South-facing is best in the northern hemisphere; east and west are workable; north rarely pays.

☐	Largest unobstructed roof plane faces south, southwest, or southeast
☐	Pitch is between roughly 15 and 40 degrees (flatter and steeper can work with racking)
☐	No trees, chimneys, or neighbouring buildings shade that plane between 9am and 3pm
☐	Usable area is free of vents, skylights, and satellite dishes, or they can be relocated
☐	Local tree growth over the next 10 years has been considered

Compass bearing of best roof plane	
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Approximate usable area (length x width)	
Shade sources noted	

3. Structure

Panels and racking add weight and wind load. Most modern roofs can take it; older or altered ones need checking.

☐	Rafters or trusses are visible in the attic and show no cracks, rot, or unpermitted modifications
☐	No previous layers of roofing were left underneath the current one (multiple layers add weight)
☐	Snow load and wind zone for your area are known (the installer's engineer will need them)
☐	Roof decking is solid plywood or OSB, not skip sheathing, or the installer has a plan for it

4. Electrical

☐	Main service panel has physical space for a solar breaker, or an upgrade is budgeted
☐	Main panel rating (100A / 200A) is known
☐	There is a clear conduit path from roof to panel
☐	Utility net-metering or buy-back policy has been checked
☐	A battery is being considered now, even if installed later — it changes the inverter choice

5. Rules and paperwork

☐	HOA or historic-district rules on rooftop solar are known
☐	Local permit requirements and typical timelines are known
☐	Roofing warranty terms regarding penetrations have been read
☐	Home insurance has been asked how a solar array affects the policy

Scoring: 20 or more ticked — proceed to quotes. 12 to 19 — get a roof inspection first. Under 12 — plan the roof before the solar. Either way, a feasibility assessment turns this into a production estimate and a real budget.

Next step

Solar Roof Feasibility Assessment — gridwisetechnology.com/solar-roof-feasibility-assessment/