



An Extended Guide · No. 1511

Solar Warranties & Lifespan

What's covered, for
how long, and by whom

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! Read this first — two honest truths about home solar

Two honest truths before we start, because they surprise a lot of good folks. First, home solar is a professional job — it takes a licensed installer, building permits, and your utility's approval to connect (called interconnection). This guide is here to help you understand, plan for, and live with solar; it is not a do-it-yourself project, and I never want you climbing on a roof or opening an electrical panel. Second, a plain grid-tied solar system — one without a battery — shuts itself off during a power outage, even in bright sunshine. That is a required safety feature, so the system cannot put electricity onto the lines while the crews are repairing them. If keeping the lights on during an outage matters to you, you will need a battery, and we will talk about that plainly. Because a solar system is a decades-long investment, its warranties — and the company standing behind them — matter nearly as much as the panels.

Warranties, lifespan, and peace of mind

A solar system is built to last for decades, so the promises behind it — the warranties — are a big part of what you're really buying. This guide explains the several kinds, in plain English, and how long the different parts tend to last.

I'm Bill, of Bill's Home Tech in Portage County. Warranties are where the fine print hides, so we'll go slow. I'll keep the numbers general on purpose — exact terms vary by product and change — and focus on what to look for and ask.

The theme to hold onto: a warranty is only as good as the company that honors it. A long promise from an outfit that may not last is worth less than a solid one from a company likely to be there. Let's make sense of it all.

★ Bring me the warranty pages

Warranty documents can be dense and easy to misread. Bring yours to me and I'll help you understand what's covered, for how long, and by whom — with nothing to sell you. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

Warranties and lifespan, on one page

The whole picture in a handful of points.

- ❑ Panels usually carry two warranties: one for defects, one for performance.
- ❑ Panels last decades and fade only a small amount each year.
- ❑ The inverter works hardest, so it may need service or replacement mid-life.
- ❑ A battery has its own warranty, often in years and total energy.
- ❑ The installer's own workmanship warranty covers their labor — ask its length.
- ❑ A warranty is only as good as the company that will honor it.

✓ Two questions cut through it all

For any warranty, ask: how long does it last, and who honors it? Those two answers tell you most of what matters — far more than a big number on a brochure.

Why warranties matter so much here

With something meant to last twenty-five years or more, the promises behind it aren't fine print — they're central to the value.

You're not buying a gadget you'll replace in a few years; you're buying a system meant to work on your roof for decades. Over that long life, the warranties are what protect you if a part fails, underperforms, or the workmanship ever causes a problem. They turn a big purchase into a protected one.

That's why, when comparing quotes, the warranties deserve as much attention as the price — a point our reading-a-quote and choosing-an-installer guides both stress. A cheaper system with thin, short warranties may cost you more in the end.

✓ Weigh warranties alongside price

Two systems at similar prices can offer very different protection. The warranties — their length, breadth, and who backs them — are part of the real value, not an afterthought.

The panel product warranty

Panels typically come with two separate warranties. The first covers the panels against defects.

A product (or materials-and-workmanship) warranty promises the panel itself is free from manufacturing defects and will be repaired or replaced if it fails for that reason. It runs for a good many years — the exact length varies by maker, so check yours.

Because panels have no moving parts, outright defects are relatively uncommon, but this warranty is your protection if one does turn up. Note who provides it — the panel manufacturer — and how a claim would actually be handled, since that involves the maker as well as your installer.

✓ Check the maker's staying power

A panel product warranty is honored by the manufacturer, so favor an established maker likely to still be around. A long warranty from a company that vanishes is a promise you can't collect on.

The panel performance warranty and gentle fade

The second panel warranty is about output over time — and it reflects a normal, gentle truth about panels.

Panels fade very slowly, making a little less power each year as they age — a small fraction annually that adds up gradually over decades. A performance (or production) warranty promises the panels will still make at least a stated share of their original output many years down the line, often out to around a quarter-century.

So this warranty isn't about defects; it's a promise about how well the panels will still be working in year twenty-something. It's one of the reasons solar is considered such a durable, long-term investment — the makers are willing to stand behind decades of output.

✓ Slow fade is normal and expected

Don't be alarmed that panels ease down a hair each year — it's built into the performance warranty and into your production estimate. Decades on, a good panel is still doing most of its original job.

The inverter warranty

The inverter is the hardest-working part, so its warranty deserves particular attention.

Because the inverter runs every sunny day translating power, it's the component most likely to need service or replacement over the system's life. Its warranty is typically shorter than the panels' long promise, though microinverters (one per panel) often carry longer coverage. Ask the length and what it includes.

Knowing the inverter may be a future service item — covered, but worth anticipating — keeps you from being surprised years down the road. It's not a flaw; it's the nature of the busiest part, as our parts guide explains.

✓ Ask what happens when the inverter's warranty ends

Since the inverter is the likeliest part to need attention, ask how long it's covered and what a replacement would involve afterward. A clear answer now spares a surprise later.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Warranties read the same everywhere, but who'll be around to honor them — and how easily they'll reach you — can differ between town and country.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, you likely have several established installers nearby, so the workmanship warranty is easier to lean on and service is close at hand.

- Plenty of local installers makes honoring a workmanship warranty easier.
- Service calls are usually quick, being close by.
- Still check each company's track record and staying power.
- Manufacturer warranties work the same regardless of location.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, there may be fewer local installers, and some travel to reach you — so a company's longevity and willingness to come out for a claim matter even more.

- Favor an installer likely to still serve your area years from now.
- Ask how far away they are and how service calls work for a claim.
- For a battery backing up a well, its warranty is worth extra scrutiny.
- Keep paperwork organized — it's harder to sort out from a distance.

★ Worried who'll honor it out here?

In the country, an installer's staying power is part of the warranty's value. I'm glad to help you weigh that and keep your coverage documented. Call (330) 200-8042.

The battery warranty, if you have one

A battery is a significant part with its own coverage, worth understanding before you buy.

Home batteries carry their own warranties, often stated in years and sometimes in how much total energy they'll deliver over their life, or the output they'll still hold at the end of the term. Because a battery does wear gradually with use, these terms describe how much life the maker stands behind.

Ask how the battery warranty is measured, what output it promises at the end, and who honors it. As with everything, weigh the promise against the maker's reliability. Our adding-batteries guide covers batteries more fully.

✓ Ask how the battery warranty is counted

A battery warranty might be in years, in total energy delivered, or both — and promise a certain remaining capacity at the end. Ask which, so you know exactly what you're getting.

The installer's workmanship warranty

Separate from all the manufacturer warranties is the installer's own promise on their labor — and it's just as important.

A workmanship (or labor) warranty covers the quality of the installation itself: the mounting, the sealing, the wiring. If a roof penetration leaks or a connection fails because of how it was installed, this is what covers the fix. Ask how long it lasts and exactly what it includes.

A generous workmanship warranty from a company likely to stick around is worth a great deal, because installation issues are exactly the kind of thing that can crop up over the years. A short one, or one from an outfit that may not last, is worth much less.

✓ This is the one that's all on your installer

Manufacturer warranties ride on the makers; the workmanship warranty rides entirely on your installer. It's a big reason to choose an established, local company — as our choosing-an-installer guide urges.

Roof penetrations and leak coverage

For a roof-mounted system, one specific worry deserves its own mention: the holes where the mounts attach.

A roof mount is fastened through the roofing, and a skilled installer seals every attachment so it doesn't leak. The workmanship warranty should cover those seals — ask specifically whether roof leaks caused by the install are included, and for how long. It's a fair and important question.

This is one reason a ground mount, which touches nothing on your roof, appeals to some folks, as our roof-versus-ground guide notes. For a roof system, solid leak coverage from a reputable installer is your protection, and worth confirming in writing.

✓ Ask specifically about roof-leak coverage

Don't assume leaks are covered — ask. A trustworthy installer warrants their roof penetrations against leaks and will tell you plainly for how long. Get that in writing with the rest.

Who honors which warranty

A solar system's warranties come from different places, and knowing who's responsible for each saves confusion when you need one.

- **Panel product and performance:** the panel manufacturer.
- **Inverter:** the inverter manufacturer.
- **Battery:** the battery manufacturer.
- **Workmanship and roof seals:** your installer.
- **Getting a claim handled:** usually your installer coordinates with the maker.

In practice, your installer is often your first call for any warranty issue, handling the manufacturer side for you — which is another reason a good, lasting installer is so valuable. Confirm that they'll be your point of contact for claims, so you're not left navigating manufacturers alone.

What if the installer or maker goes out of business?

It's the uncomfortable question that makes staying power matter — so let's face it honestly.

If your installer closes up shop, the manufacturer warranties on the panels, inverter, and battery generally still stand — but you may have to deal with the makers directly, or find another company to handle service. And the workmanship warranty, which was the installer's own promise, may be hard to collect on.

If a manufacturer folds, its warranty can become difficult to enforce too. That's precisely why these guides keep urging you toward established makers and a local installer with a track record. You can't eliminate the risk, but you can choose companies likely to be there.

! Longevity is part of the warranty

The best warranty on paper is worthless from a company that's gone. Weigh how established and local your installer is, and how solid the manufacturers are, as part of judging the coverage itself.

Warranties when you sell the home

Warranties can carry real value into a home sale — if they transfer. Worth knowing before you list.

Many solar warranties can transfer to a new homeowner, which makes an owned system a selling point — the buyer inherits the protection along with the panels. But transfer rules vary, and some require a step or a registration to pass along. Check the terms for each warranty.

This ties into how you paid and how you'll sell, covered in our paying-for-solar and selling-your-home guides. Keeping your warranty paperwork complete and organized makes any transfer — and any claim — far smoother down the road.

✓ Ask whether the warranties transfer

If you might sell someday, ask whether each warranty transfers to a buyer and what it takes to do so. Transferable coverage is a genuine selling point worth preserving.

Reading the warranty fine print

As with any warranty, the details decide what's really covered. A few things to look for.

- **Length:** how many years each warranty runs.
- **What's covered:** defects, output, labor, roof seals — and what's excluded.
- **Registration:** whether you must register the product to keep the warranty valid.
- **Claims process:** who to contact and who pays for labor and shipping on a replacement.
- **Transferability:** whether it passes to a future homeowner.

! Watch for registration requirements

Some warranties require you to register the equipment soon after install to stay valid. Missing that step can quietly void coverage. Ask your installer to confirm any registration is done, and keep proof.

How long the parts really last

Warranties are promises; here's the honest lived reality of how long solar parts tend to serve.

Panels are the marathoners — they routinely work for decades, fading only slightly, which is why their performance warranties stretch so far. Racking and mounts, well installed, last a long time too. The inverter, working hardest, is the part most likely to be serviced or replaced somewhere in the middle of the system's life.

A battery, if you have one, has its own lifespan measured in years of daily cycling. Knowing this shape — panels for the long haul, inverter as a likely mid-life item, battery on its own clock — lets you plan the decades ahead without surprises.

✓ Plan for one inverter chapter

Over a system's long life, it's reasonable to expect the inverter may need attention once. Budgeting for that possibility mentally — it's warranted for a while — keeps the long view realistic and calm.

The warranties at a glance

The several warranties, who backs them, and the general feel of their length. Confirm the exact years for your own equipment.

Warranty	Backed by	General length
Panel product	Panel maker	Many years
Panel performance	Panel maker	Often ~25 years
Inverter	Inverter maker	Varies; shorter
Battery	Battery maker	Varies; years
Workmanship	Your installer	Varies; ask

The lengths are left general here because they truly vary by product and change over time — confirm the exact terms for your equipment. What's constant is the value of asking how long, and who honors it, for each.

Keeping your warranty paperwork

A warranty you can't find is hard to use. A little organizing now pays off years later.

Keep every warranty document — panels, inverter, battery, and the installer's workmanship promise — together with your contract, permits, interconnection approval, and monitoring login, in one folder, paper or digital. Note the equipment models and install date, and confirm any required registrations were done.

This is the same folder our install and incentives guides recommend. Having it complete makes a warranty claim, a service call, or a home sale far smoother — and spares future-you a frustrating hunt.

★ I'll help you build the folder

Getting all your solar paperwork — warranties included — into one tidy, findable place is exactly the kind of practical help I enjoy. Call (330) 200-8042 and we'll set it up so it's there when you need it.

Warranties versus everyday reality

All this warranty talk shouldn't leave you expecting constant trouble. The lived reality is reassuringly quiet.

In practice, a well-installed solar system asks very little and rarely needs a claim — the panels just work, year after year, as our maintenance guide describes. The warranties are there for the uncommon case, and for peace of mind, not because problems are frequent.

So understand your coverage, keep the paperwork, choose companies likely to last — and then relax. You've protected a durable, long-lived investment, and most likely you'll simply enjoy it working.

✓ Coverage for the rare day, calm for the rest

Good warranties are like good insurance: worth having, seldom needed. Set them up right, then let the system's low-fuss reality be the day-to-day you actually live with.

Questions to ask about warranties

Put these to any installer before you sign, and keep the answers with your paperwork.

Q: What are all the warranties, how long is each, and who honors them?

You want the length and backer for the panels (product and performance), the inverter, any battery, and the workmanship. Vague answers here are a flag.

Q: Does your workmanship warranty cover roof leaks, and for how long?

For a roof mount, this is key. A trustworthy installer warrants their roof seals against leaks and states the term plainly.

Q: Do the warranties transfer if I sell, and are any registrations needed?

Transferable coverage adds resale value, and a missed registration can void a warranty. Confirm both, and make sure any registration gets done.

✓ Get every warranty in writing

Spoken warranty promises count for little. Make sure the length, coverage, and backer of each warranty appear in your contract or documents before you sign — as our reading-a-quote guide urges.

Common warranty misconceptions

A few tidy corrections to the ideas that mislead folks about coverage.

- **'One warranty covers everything.'** No — panels, inverter, battery, and labor are separate.
- **'A 25-year warranty means no costs for 25 years.'** The inverter may still be a mid-life service item.
- **'The longest warranty is always best.'** Only if the company will be there to honor it.
- **'Panels are covered against wearing out.'** They fade slowly — the performance warranty covers output, not zero fade.
- **'Warranties don't transfer.'** Many do — check, since it adds resale value.

✓ Length plus longevity equals value

A warranty's worth is its length times the odds the company honors it. A shorter warranty from a rock-solid, local installer can beat a longer one from a shaky outfit.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about solar warranties and lifespan.

Q: How long do solar panels last?

Panels are the long-haul part — routinely working for decades, fading only a small fraction each year. Their performance warranties often reach around a quarter-century, which reflects just how durable they are.

Q: What's the difference between the panel warranties?

There are two: a product warranty against defects, and a performance warranty promising the panels will still make at least a stated share of their output many years on. One covers failures; the other covers the gentle fade over time.

Q: Will I ever have to replace the inverter?

Possibly. The inverter works hardest and is the part most likely to need service or replacement somewhere in the system's life — it's warrantied for a while, and it's normal, not a defect. Ask how long yours is covered.

Q: What happens to my warranty if the installer goes out of business?

The manufacturer warranties on the equipment generally still stand, though you may deal with the makers directly. The installer's own workmanship warranty may be hard to collect. That's why choosing an established, local installer matters so much.

★ Warranty pages making your eyes glaze?

They do that to everyone. Bring yours to me and I'll help you understand what's covered, for how long, and by whom — so you know exactly what protection you have. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made solar warranties and lifespan feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I don't sell solar and I don't do the licensed electrical work or the rooftop install myself — I help you understand it all, ask the right questions, and line up a trustworthy local solar installer, so you never feel talked into anything.

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

The Warranties in a Solar System

Several promises, from different companies

	Backed by	General length
Panel product	Panel maker	Many years
Panel performance	Panel maker	Often ~25 yrs
Inverter	Inverter maker	Varies; shorter
Battery	Battery maker	Varies; years
Workmanship	Your installer	Varies; ask

Confirm exact years for your own equipment -- lengths vary and change.

Lifespan: What Lasts How Long

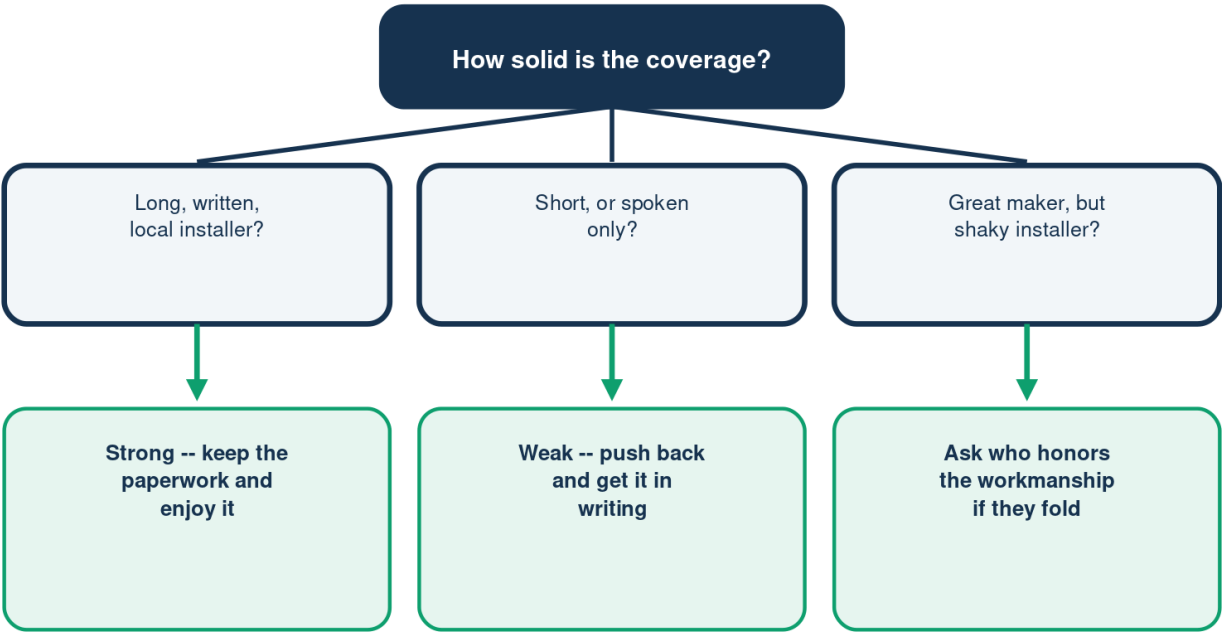
The honest feel of each part's working life

	Lifespan feel	Note
Panels	Decades	Fade slightly
Inverter	Mid-life service	Works hardest
Battery	Many years	Wears with use
Racking	Long	Well installed

Plan for perhaps one inverter chapter over the system's long life.

Is This Warranty Worth Much?

Coverage is only as good as the company behind it



A long warranty from a company that's gone is worth little.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.

Making a Warranty Work for You

Four steps so coverage is there when you need it



Good warranties are like insurance: worth having, seldom needed.



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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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