

Five things you should know before buying solar pv panels

Or how do I ensure that income from my solar PV system lasts 20 years?

1 SOLAR PANELS NEVER GO WRONG! DON'T THEY?

The Government's FIT scheme will provide you with income from your solar PV system for at least 20 years. This is a long time. Although solar PV panels are generally very reliable, they can go wrong. Most PV manufacturers experience production problems and quality control issues at some time. You need to know how these issues will get resolved if your modules stop working or underperform. Ask your installer to tell you if they can be returned to the original manufacturer easily for replacement if things go wrong. Ask if you need to pay for the panels to be independently tested first before claiming on the warranty. Many cheaper Far Eastern panels can be poorly made and are sold on the basis that the manufacturer is not responsible for replacing panels if they go faulty. According to Photon Magazine, panels from Sanyo, REC, BP and Kyocera have all suffered production defects in the past. The question is how easy was it for the consumer to get these panels replaced?

ANTARIS SOLAR response: ANTARIS SOLAR has its own in-house quality control and solar PV research laboratories called The Tec Institute (see www.tec-institut.de/en/) which ensures all panels are tested to the highest levels for long term reliability. ANTARIS SOLAR has customer service centres around the world, ensuring customer satisfaction if a problem does occur. ANTARIS SOLAR is part of the Goede Group, which has over 10 million customers worldwide and looks back on more than 30 years of business experience. Faulty panels made by ANTARIS SOLAR will be replaced according to the conditions of our long 12 year product and 30 year performance warranty.

12 years
PRODUCT WARRANTY

30 years
performance warranty



2 WHO IS GOING TO HONOUR YOUR MANUFACTURER'S PANEL WARRANTY?

The world of PV manufacturers is changing rapidly. GTM Research claims that up to 180 PV module makers are set to disappear by 2015. As prices have fallen so dramatically, many manufacturers are going out of business or being absorbed into big corporations. Consumers will be told that their panel maker is no longer in business, rendering these PV panels useless if they fail. Like the recent PPI scandal, insurance companies may not be so helpful when trying to claim back money on so called "insurance backed" warranties when manufacturers have ceased trading, so check the terms of your warranty before buying.

ANTARIS SOLAR response: ANTARIS SOLAR is part of the Goede Group in Germany which runs the third biggest specialist coin business in the world. This business is cash positive so providing the Group with financial stability during these tough economic conditions. ANTARIS SOLAR is currently expanding in the UK, even though many other PV manufacturers have recently withdrawn from the UK, including Schott Solar, BP Solar, Azur Solar and many others. ANTARIS SOLAR has its own cash reserves for ensuring warranties are honoured. We are not convinced that so called insurance backed warranties will be easy for consumers to claim on in years to come.

Member of:



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sonnenenergie e.V.
International Solar Energy Society, German Section

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LIVING BY THE SUN!

3 IS YOUR INSTALLER GOING TO BE AROUND TO REPAIR YOUR SOLAR SYSTEM IN YEARS TO COME?

Sadly, many smaller PV installation companies have gone out of business or withdrawn from solar installation because of the sudden drop in demand caused, by the changes to the FIT rates by the Government. Many unscrupulous installers know they will never honour the long installation warranties they quote on the cheap deals they offer. They are often just looking for a quick sale.

ANTARIS SOLAR response: *Choose your installer wisely. Go for an installer with a long track record in the community. Avoid unbelievably cheap offers. A quality installer needs to make an honest margin to put funds aside to ensure the business is there in the future to service all their installations. Even if the installer goes bust, ANTARIS SOLAR will still ensure that any faulty panels will be replaced under the terms of our warranty.*

4 BUYING THE CHEAPEST IS NOT ALWAYS THE BEST LONG TERM INVESTMENT CHOICE

There are a number of very cheap panels on the market at the moment which look very tempting for investors and consumers. However, as with many things in life, you get what you pay for and you may be making a very risky long term investment. There are many reasons why some panels are so much cheaper than the rest, including:

- a) Bankrupt stock and panels dumped to generate quick cash before bankruptcy.
- b) Panels made from “B” and “C” quality grade cells.
- c) Panels sold on the no-returns basis via containers from China.

ANTARIS SOLAR response: *Do you really want to save a few pounds by buying panels from an unknown source which bear an unknown brand name that has no track record in the UK? Always check that the modules are made from “A” Grade cells. Antaris sells only premium modules made to the highest standards. We also ensure that our long warranties will be honoured in future by putting money to one side every time we sell a panel to make sure that replacements are already paid for. If your panels go wrong then your FITS income could be cut short, so negating any up front savings made from buying a cheap panel.*

5 NOT ALL PV PANELS ARE THE SAME

Often PV panels look very similar when looked at in daylight. But looked at under electroluminescence testing we can often see many cracked cells not visible to the naked eye. These problems are normally associated with cheaper panels which have not gone through rigorous quality checks. Also, panels could be made of “B” and “C” grade quality cells without you knowing it. This could lead to the panels underperforming or failing early.

ANTARIS SOLAR response: *ANTARIS SOLAR panels are made to the highest standards and are quality tested by the Tec Institute and other independent testing labs such as PI in Berlin. If problems are encountered in the future then you have the re-assurance that you can pick the phone up and someone will be there to sort out any customer services issues for you. Therefore you can sleep at night knowing your long term solar investment is under the care of a company you can trust.*

