

Solar Panel Maintenance

Summary:

- ✓ **Solar panels are low maintenance and last up to 30 years**
 - ✓ **They should be gently cleaned with water every one to two years**
 - ✓ **Solar panels should be professionally serviced every 5-10 years**
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1) Maintenance of solar panels

Solar panels have no moving parts, which makes them relatively low maintenance. To reduce solar panel costs and maintenance over time, the owner will need to look after them.

2) Solar panel maintenance checklist

1. Get the panels serviced
2. Check for any issues
3. Clean the solar panels
4. Remove potential dangers
5. Keep solar panels out of the shade
6. Make sure the inverters are flashing green
7. Check the day-to-day performance
8. Keep a maintenance logbook

Service the panels

It is recommended that **a professional to check over the system at least once every 5-10 years**. This way, financial surprises can be avoided, whilst making sure the panels are generating enough power to save money on bills.

Check for any issues

From ground level, perhaps with a pair of binoculars, check the solar panels for any dirt build-up or problems with the mounting system, such as bolts looking loose. Try to have a quick look at least twice per year.

Additionally, a sudden drop in the output of your solar panels is noticed, this could be an indication that something is wrong.

Clean the solar panels

The panels need cleaning every one to two years, on average, unless they get particularly dirty for some reason.

The most effective way to clean the solar panels is with a hose (from ground level). Be careful with detergent and high-pressure water sprayers, as using either of these can invalidate the warranty.

In the summertime, remove any dust or pollen from the panels, whilst in the winter, you should look out for any snow or debris.

Remove potential dangers

Any overhanging branches should be cleared to remove any threats to the panels, such as falling branches. You should also make sure you keep any vermin, such as squirrels or pigeons away from your panels.

Keep solar panels out of the shade

The panels' energy production can be badly affected if they're hidden from that precious sunlight. Keep any nearby trees pruned, and don't let ivy grow anywhere near your panels.

Make sure the inverters are flashing green lights

When the light on the inverter(s) is flashing green, it means there are no faults in the solar energy system. If they are *not* flashing, it could mean there's an underlying issue that needs resolving and should not be left untouched.

Inverters need replacing every 10 years or so, sooner than the solar panels themselves.

Check the day-to-day performance of your panels

Make sure to track how much energy has been generated at the same time each day, as this will help the identification of any problems quickly.

Keep a maintenance logbook

Make sure that a record is kept of any maintenance, cleaning work, or replacement jobs, you have done on your panels. This can help servicemen diagnose the cause of issues if they come up in the future.

3) Top tips for solar panel maintenance

- If mounting your roof to clean your panels isn't an option, a professional can be hired to come to the property to carry out the clean
- Enlisting a professional installer is less likely to result in any dodgy complications
- Placement is everything. Avoid shade, remove any overhanging tree branches, and make sure they're in view of sunshine. The panels are placed at an angle – this way, any rain and debris will slide right off
- Think about the long-term. Solar panel repairs can be costly; try to avoid any quick fixes. By spending more on a new inverter, rather than repairing it over and over, is likely to save more money in the long-run.

4) Do solar panels in the UK need extra maintenance?

Solar panels in the UK do not typically need extra maintenance, since the UK climate is generally favourable to them.

According to manufacturers' standards, 25 degrees C is the optimum temperature for solar panels to operate – so the UK summertime is the prime time for panels.

However, the UK is also notoriously drizzly, which can affect the panels if they're not installed properly. These panels are installed at an angle so that any rain runs off smoothly, whilst also dislodging any stray debris.

Luckily, most areas of the UK aren't prone to getting much snowfall in the winter. This is good news for solar panel installations, saving on repair and maintenance costs massively.

5) Budgeting

Overall, the average solar panel system isn't very high maintenance. As of 2023, it will cost around £100 every five years for the annual service, plus any costs for the cleaning equipment.

These costs are minimal, and over the years will make it a worthwhile investment.

Plus, the need for repairs is typically infrequent – and the technology is only getting more popular.

Inverters are estimated to have a 10 year life, panels from 20 -30 years. The renewal of these should be budgeted for.