



## SOLAR ADVANTAGE VALUE ESTIMATOR (SAVE) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ***What is SAVE and why should I use it?***

SAVE is a tool that allows the user to calculate the present value of a new or existing solar photovoltaic (PV) system based on the amount of energy savings produced. This tool is particularly useful for those who are involved in the sale of a residential property. SAVE provides a dollar estimate that can be used as guidance for calculating the added value of a solar PV system installed on a residential building.

- ***Who should use SAVE?***

SAVE was designed to target the audience of real estate professionals and appraisers. The tool may also be used by homeowners and other industry stakeholders who are interested in learning the present value of an installed solar PV system.

- ***What information do I need to be able to use the tool?***

You will need the street address and city or zip code for the building on which the solar PV system is installed. If you received solar PV incentives from the New Solar Homes Partnership or the Emerging Renewables Program, the specifications for your system may be pre-loaded. If your solar PV system information is not pre-loaded to SAVE, you can still use the tool by entering your system size (in watts) and approximate age.

- ***Why isn't my address in the database?***

The Energy Commission is working on expanding the database of homes for the SAVE tool. For this reason, SAVE was developed with the option to complete analyses with user-entered data for any solar home not already in the database.

- ***Can I use SAVE for evaluating commercial properties?***

While SAVE does incorporate various commercial utility rates, it was initially intended to be used for evaluating residential properties. Commercial utility rates will not be updated as frequently.

- ***Why are there low, average, and high utility rates? Which one should I use?***

Many electric utilities have tiered rate structures that are based upon a consumer's energy use. The Energy Commission suggests that you use the average utility rate if you are unsure of which tier you fall into. SAVE also allows you to enter a custom utility rate. For a more accurate measurement, you can add the electric rate from your last utility bill.

- ***I don't understand what some of the technical terms in SAVE mean. Where can I find definitions?***

Throughout the SAVE tool, you will find hyperlinked (underlined) terms. If you click on these terms, you will be directed to a definition.

SAVE is a California Energy  
Commission webtool

