

## Cleaning Your Solar Panel

Cleaning is certainly not the first thing on people's mind when it comes to solar panels, but it is extremely important for your solar system's operation. Anything exposed to the elements will over time become dirty and in the case of solar panels, where the external surface is dependent on sunlight, ensuring they are clean will have a direct impact on your energy output.

A cloudy day will provide sufficient diffused light by which your solar panel will produce electricity. The maximum electrical production occurs with bright and sunny weather conditions. Under a light overcast day, the panels might produce about half as much as under full sun, ranging down to as little as five to ten percent under a dark overcast day. Dirty panels can affect your energy output the same way as an overcast day. Many of the companies in the solar panel maintenance business indicate dirt and debris build up can reduce a panel's energy output by 15 to 25 percent.



- Inspect the solar panels on a periodic basis (frequency depends on your environment or the manufacturer's recommendations) to remove any debris and dirt and ensure all connections are tight.

- Panels installed and used in dusty areas may require more frequent inspection.

- Clean the surface of a solar panel with warm water and dishwashing soap to remove any accumulation of dirt and grime. (Don't let soapy water dry on panel as it can leave a film). Wash the glass face of the panels during either the early morning or in the evening. Avoid spraying cold water onto hot panels or you could risk cracking them.

- Be sure panel is completely clean, even a leaf, bird droppings or tree sap can severely reduce the panel's energy-producing capacity.

### Must haves for cleaning your panels:

- Be Safe- have someone with you to hold the ladder and be there in case you have a problem.
- Ladder to get to the solar panel
- Garden hose
- Warm water and dishwashing soap
- Clean soft cloths to wash and dry off.