



# How efficient are solar batteries

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But while most homeowners love the idea of having energy independence and backup power for grid outages, solar batteries are a major purchase that can be difficult to understand &#8212; let alone shop for.

We welcome all homeowners interested in battery storage, but it is important to establish goals before diving into the world of solar batteries because your goals will help determine which type of solar battery best suits your needs. For example, a new tech enthusiast will likely choose an entirely different type of solar battery than a homeowner looking to maximize their cost savings.

Solar batteries can be divided into six categories based on their chemical composition: Lithium-ion, lithium iron phosphate (LFP), lead-acid, flow, saltwater, and nickel-cadmium.

Frankly, the first three categories (lithium-ion, LFP, and lead-acid) make up a vast majority of the solar batteries available to homeowners. However, battery technology is evolving at lightning speed, so it&#8217;s worth keeping an eye on them all.

Lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries have become the predominant choice for home energy storage (among many other things) due largely to their high energy density. Basically, you can pack a ton of power in a small space - which is ideal for storing thousands of Watts of solar production in your garage.

There are a few major downsides to lithium-ion solar batteries. First, as a new technology made up of high-demand elements, they are relatively expensive. Second, if certain lithium-ion batteries are not properly installed, they pose a risk of catching fire through a process called thermal runaway. Finally, some Li-ion batteries contain nickel and cobalt, which in some cases, are mined through questionable practices.

High densityHigher costNo maintenanceRisk of thermal runaway (fire) if not properly installedLong lifespan (10+ years)Questionable nickel and cobalt mining practices&gt;80% depth of dischargeWidest range of make/model optionsLithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteriesWait, lithium again? Yes, lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries technically fall into the category of lithium-ion batteries, but this specific battery chemistry has emerged as an ideal choice for home solar storage and therefore deserves to be viewed separately from lithium-ion.

The drawback to LFP batteries is that, at this point, they are typically more expensive than standard Li-ion batteries because it's an even newer technology with fewer suppliers.

Regardless, LFP batteries make up four of our eight best solar batteries of 2024. Our highest-rated models include Franklin Home Power, Panasonic EverVolt, SunPower SunVault, and Enphase IQ.



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Lifecycles before degradation 1,000 to 10,000 500 to 1,000 Energy density 40-55 Wh per lb 45-120 Wh per lb  
Depth of discharge Up to 100% 80-95% Operating temperature -4 F to 140 F 32 F to 113 F Risk of thermal runaway? Near non-existent Noteworthy if not properly installed Ideal usage Self-consumption & TOU modes Backup mode Cost \$\$\$\$\$

Lead acid batteries were once the go-to choice for solar storage (and still are for many other applications) simply because the technology has been around since before the American Civil War. However, this battery type falls short of lithium-ion and LFP in almost every way, and few (if any) residential solar batteries are made with this chemistry.

Compared to the lithium-ion batteries described above, lead acid batteries are much bigger, heavier, and often require regular maintenance. In general, this battery type is best at providing short bursts of energy - which is great for starting gas cars but not ideal for prolonged home backup needs.

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