Hybrid inverter with solar battery charging

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There are plenty of options available when it comes to selecting a solar inverter: these inverters vary in size, efficiency, performance, and capabilities. So what"s the best solution for you? If you"re thinking about adding a battery to your solar panel system now or in the future, you may want to consider installing a hybrid inverter.

A hybrid inverter, otherwise known as a hybrid grid-tied inverter or a battery-based inverter, combines two separate components-a solar inverter and a battery inverter-into a single piece of equipment.

An inverter is a critical component of any solar energy system: you need it to convert the direct current (DC) electricity generated by your solar panels into alternating current (AC) electricity for your home"s appliances. If you install a solar panel system with a traditional inverter and decide to add a battery system later on, you"ll need a separate battery-specific inverter to convert the electricity back and forth from AC to DC current for your battery to store and discharge.

However, when you pair your solar panel system with a hybrid inverter, a separate battery inverter isn"t necessary: it can function as both an inverter for electricity from your solar panels and a solar battery.

Importantly, while hybrid inverters are designed to incorporate storage, you can install this technology without batteries; in fact, many people choose to install a hybrid inverter preemptively in anticipation of adding batteries to their system in the future.

A common misconception about solar is that if you install a system, you"ll always have power during outages. In most cases, this is not true: traditional grid-tied solar inverters automatically shut off during power outages for safety purposes, cutting off power generation from your solar panel system.

If you want to keep your property running on backup solar power during a grid outage, hybrid inverters paired

with batteries are a great solution. Some hybrid inverters have both on-grid and off-grid capabilities, allowing you to continue running on solar power even if the grid goes dark.

With a hybrid inverter, all of your solar electricity-whether being sent to the grid, self-consumed on your property, or stored in your battery-is converted through one component. This allows for "centralized monitoring," which means you can monitor both your solar panel system and battery performance through one platform.

If you already have an operational solar panel system and want to add a battery, the easiest way to do so is to install an AC-coupled battery with its own inverter. Since your solar panel system already has its own grid-tied inverter, swapping this component out for a hybrid solution will require additional re-wiring and labor, which can increase the cost of your solar-plus-storage system.

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