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| Emergency Backstop  webinar Q&As |
| Solar Victoria hosted a webinar with Q&A session  on 11 September 2024 |

Solar panels on a power line

Description automatically generated

Answers to questions asked of Victorian Distributed Network Service Providers and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

Solar Victoria invited solar retailers, installers and others to a webinar on Wednesday 11 September 2024 to discuss emergency backstop requirements.

The webinar was hosted with DEECA Energy in partnership with Victorian DNSPs.

The full emergency backstop industry guide has more comprehensive information and is available here: <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/households/victorias-emergency-backstop-mechanism-for-solar/industry-guidance>.

## Are details of inverters compatible from 1 October available?

The Clean Energy Council maintains the CSIP-AUS SCC compliant inverter list: <https://cleanenergycouncil.org.au/industry-programs/products-program/inverters>

Solar Victoria maintains a list of compliant inverters for the Solar Homes Program. If they are not on this list, they are not compliant: <https://www.solar.vic.gov.au/product-lists#inverters>

All DNSPs will also be providing a list of compatible devices/ OEMS on their websites.

## New builds – how to connect the system to the internet?

**Jemena and AusNet** will allow for a hot spot connection where possible to complete the device registration process. This will not allow for the device testing to occur, however once the customer has moved in and internet is available, Jemena will be able to then commission the device. Until such time, the inverter will be set to a low static export limit.

**AusNet** hasamended its position since the webinar to allow for configuration via hot spot, for homes which do not have a persistent internet connection.

If it is within the valid period of the Certificate of Electrical Safety, a new Certificate of Electrical Safety (CoES) will not be required. A new build offers the best opportunity to hardwire an ethernet cable to the inverter.

**CitiPower/Powercor/United Energy** advises that before proceeding with connection, each site must have supply available with an active NMI and solar pre-approval application. There are two options:

1. Complete the registration and capability testing via a hotspot and set the pre-approval export limit. This will allow connection to the device. When the hotspot connection is lost the default export will be zero.

When the customer moves in and establishes an internet connection, if the inverter automatically connects to the internet, there is no need to redo the registration and capability testing. The pre-approved export limit and emergency backstop capability will be re-established.

1. If the inverter does not connect to the internet, the customer will have to arrange for the installer to configure the inverter to connect to the internet. Return to the site once the customer has moved in and established an internet connection, then complete the registration and capability testing process on your second visit.

## Wifi is the most common connection method to router for inverters, with ethernet connections unlikely across most. What are the options and solutions?

Wifi is the most cost-effective solution to connect inverters to the internet. If the wifi signal strength is problematic, you should discuss the option of ethernet with your customer. Sometimes a SIM card for the inverter is an option, which can be less prone to issues causing loss of connection than Wi-Fi.

All steps should be taken to ensure that an internet connection is established. You should discuss requirements for internet connectivity with your customer at the point of sale.

## How will emergency backstop support two phase power sites with a single inverter and NET metering due to current restrictions of 5 kW per home rather than 5 kW per phase?

All new and replacement inverters will need to be backstop enabled, including for single, split-phase, two and three phase power.

**AusNet** allocates exports per phase and not per home (for two phase).

**Jemena** also allocates exports per phase (5kW per phase).

**CitiPower/Powercor/United Energy** advises that all sites regardless of network configuration must comply with the emergency backstop mandate.

**When completing a ‘like-for-like’ solar inverter repair, is the new inverter required to be back-stop enabled?**

For solar pre-approvals received after 1 October 2024, all new installations, replacements (even like-for-like) or upgrades will be required to be emergency backstop enabled.

If a like-for-like replacement is required on an installation approved prior to 1 October 2024, it does not need to be backstop enabled.

For solar pre-approvals received prior to 1 October 2024, warranty/ like-for-like replacements are not required to be updated to the emergency backstop requirements.

## What happens to an existing solar system we are adding a solar system to?

Modifying or altering an existing solar installation, including to increase capacity, is deemed an upgrade and the inverter connection must comply with the emergency backstop mandate.

## If we install a small system (ie. 2.2kW), do we still need to connect to the internet?

From 1 October 2024, all solar systems less than 200kVA must be emergency backstop enabled. For all systems less than 30kVA, this must be via the CSIP-AUS platform, which requires an internet connection.

All Solar Victoria installations are required to be internet connected and backstop enabled from 1 October 2024, unless internet is not practicable. In this case an exemption may be sought and low static export limit applied.

## In some suburbs the export limit is 0kW for new installs – will this change enable households to install solar with regular export limits?

Where the solar system has a capacity of 30 kVA or less and the site cannot practicably be connected to the internet, customers will have a low static export limit applied to the solar system - meaning that it can only export a small amount of electricity to the grid.

This export limit will be set by the distribution business based on several factors, including the nearby rooftop solar penetration and the local capacity of the electricity grid. It is unlikely to be greater than 1.5 kW.

The distribution business must include terms reflecting these requirements in its agreement with the customer.

**Jemena** advises that by default, areas with export limitations will remain at 0kVA export until the introduction of flexible exports.

**CitiPower/Powercor/United Energy** advises that all solar pre-approvals are assessed based on available capacity in the localised network. The emergency backstop mandate will have no impact on the assessment of solar pre-approvals.

Sites with a low static export limit (that can be connected to the internet) are required to be emergency backstop enabled, to ensure that their electricity generation can be turned down or switched off in a minimum system load emergency.

## Can we replace an inverter if it is not CSIP and the panels are no longer on the CEC approved list?

You can replace a non-CSIP inverter with a CSIP inverter. Any replacement inverter must be CSIP-AUS certified and be on the CEC approved list: <https://cleanenergycouncil.org.au/industry-programs/products-program/inverters>

All panels must be on the CEC approved list: <https://cleanenergycouncil.org.au/industry-programs/products-program/modules>

## What is In-band and Out-of-band?

In-band and Out-of-band refers to whether the LFDI is sent directly to the distributor’s utility server automatically.

In-band means the distributor gets it automatically. Out-of-band means they do not, and it must be provided manually.

## Why is Jemena not supporting in and out-of-band? This seems to be a gap compared with the SAPN testing.

Jemena will be supporting in-band shortly after the go live date (1-2 months). Jemena’s systems were not ready to support in-band registration by the go live date.

## Where can OEMs/ manufacturers find information about the onboarding process with DNSPs?

Please visit the DNSP websites for details about OEM onboarding with your local distribution businesses:

* [AusNet backstop](https://www.ausnetservices.com.au/solar/solar-emergency-backstop)
* [CitiPower backstop](https://www.powercor.com.au/network-planning-and-projects/emergency-backstop-minimum-demand-events/)
* [Jemena backstop](https://www.jemena.com.au/electricity/embedded-generation--solar/)
* [Powercor backstop](https://www.powercor.com.au/network-planning-and-projects/emergency-backstop-minimum-demand-events/)
* [United Energy backstop](https://www.unitedenergy.com.au/network-management/emergency-backstop/)

We also encourage OEMs to make guides available for installers to appropriately set up their products.

Guidance and training for installers, along with DSNP website links, are accessible on the Solar Victoria website: <https://www.solar.vic.gov.au/emergency-backstop-training>

The CEC also maintains information regarding DNSP validation testing.

**If a full inverter shutdown backstop event occurs for hybrid inverters in backup mode, should their grids be disconnected (such as a local grid failure rather than a wider area failure), and internet connections remain fully active?**

**CitiPower/Powercor/United Energy** advises that during a declared minimum demand event they will curtail solar exports to meet the target demand. If they are unable to reach the target through curtailment, they may need to turn generation off.

If connectivity is lost for any reason (including a network outage) under the CSIP-AUS protocol inverters will automatically default to zero export until internet connectivity is reestablished.

## If the system is compliant and capable of the backstop mechanism, is full export guaranteed for systems above 30kVA?

**Jemena** advises that by default, areas with export limitations will remain at 0kVA export until the introduction of flexible exports.

**CitiPower/Powercor/United Energy** advises that all solar pre-approvals are assessed based on available capacity in the localised network. The emergency backstop mandate will have no impact on the assessment of solar pre-approvals.

## If pre-approval is done before 1 October and installation after, will the installation fall under Emergency Backstop regulation?

If pre-approval occurred prior to 1 October, the system is not required to be backstop enabled.

## Will customers have the option to also increase their current feed-in limits if the grid needs more power?

Feed in or export limits are fixed as per your solar pre-approved limit.

With the Australian Energy Regulator expected to release its Flexible Exports Guidance Note in October 2024, all DNSPs are considering how they will be introducing flexible exports.

# More information

For more information on the emergency backstop, visit [energy.vic.gov.au/emergency-backstop-solar](http://www.energy.vic.gov.au/emergency-backstop-solar)

## Community languages

To speak with us in your language, please call the free National Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450.

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