

Q: Is solar thermal the same as solar hot water?

A: Yes. The terms are used interchangeably.

Q: What happens during a power outage?

A: Most solar pumps need electricity to work. During a power outage these pumps will

not work and therefore the solar thermal system will not produce hot water. If a PV pump

is used your solar thermal system will continue to operate through a power outage.

Q: Can i use an existing hot water tank?

A: Yes. Generally a solar pre-heat tank will be installed and plumbed between the

incoming water service and your existing tank. In this configuration your existing

tank will provide a backup to the solar hot water system. A solar tank can also

replace your existing hot water tank.

Q: What is the difference between solar thermal and solar PV?

A: Solar thermal generates heat whereas solar PV generates electricity.

Q: Can't i just use solar electric to offset my hot water load?

A: The payback is generally better for solar thermal in heating applications. More heat per

square meter can be captured using a solar thermal system as compared with PV.

Q: Are there different types of solar hot water collectors?

A: Yes. The most common types are flat plate collectors and evacuated tube collectors.

Flat Plate Collectors – Glazed flat-plate collectors are insulated, weatherproofed boxes that contain a dark absorber plate under one or more glass or plastic (polymer) covers. Unglazed flat-plate collectors—typically used for solar pool heating—have a dark absorber plate, made of metal or polymer, without a cover or enclosure.

Evacuated Tube Collectors – Feature parallel rows of transparent glass tubes. Each tube contains

a glass outer tube and metal heat tube attached to a fin. The fin's coating absorbs solar energy but inhibits radiative heat loss.

Q: What maintenance is necessary?

A: A solar thermal system is almost maintenance free. You should regularly check the solar fluid levels, the solar control, and circulator to be sure there is no malfunction.

Q: How large of a solar thermal system do i need?

A: The system will be sized according to your hot water requirements and the particular configuration of your home or business.