

MidAmerican Energy

Distributed Generation Interconnection

Frequently Asked Questions

Distributed Generation (DG)

Q. What is distributed generation?

- A. Distributed generation is the generation of electricity from many small energy sources, e.g., solar or wind, and is located closer to the user, or customer. A form of distributed generation is on-site generation where a customer owns their own generation and is installed on their premises. MidAmerican Energy considers distributed generation to be any electric power generation rated 10,000 kilowatts (kW) and below and ultimately interconnecting to MidAmerican Energy's electric distribution system at voltages less than 100 kilovolts. An interconnection in this context refers to a connection of electric facilities between MidAmerican Energy and a customer.

Q. Can a customer install a generator on its premises and use the energy for its own purposes?

- A. Yes, subject to applicable local codes, ordinances, and safety requirements; the customer is responsible for ensuring compliance. MidAmerican Energy advises any customer who wishes to install distributed generation on their property to check local city codes and zoning requirements.

Q. Can customers who generate their own energy also rely on MidAmerican Energy some of the time, for example, when the generation is not operating?

- A. Yes. Customers will be charged their applicable rate as a MidAmerican Energy electric customer.

Q. How does a customer proceed with interconnecting a distributed generation facility?

- A. First, MidAmerican Energy suggests that customers determine potential costs and requirements of installing distributed generation. A distributed generation dealer or electrical consultant might be helpful in providing this information. MidAmerican Energy suggests that customers then develop a firm plan to install distributed generation and call (888) 427-5632 to begin MidAmerican Energy's "interconnection process". The purpose of the interconnection process is to protect our other customers and our employees from risks that could result from improper installations of distributed generation.

Q. Will MidAmerican Energy design, install, operate, or maintain a distributed generation facility on a customer's premises?

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A. No. The customer is responsible for coordination of the design, installation, operation, and maintenance of a customer-owned distributed generating facility.

Q. Can MidAmerican Energy provide contact information for designers or installers of distributed generation facilities?

A. No. MidAmerican Energy does not provide such information.

Q. Is there a fee for submitting an interconnection request form?

A. Yes. There is a one-time fee, indicated on the interconnection request form, and is based on the type and size of the generator to be connected to MidAmerican Energy's system. The fee is assessed to offset costs related to processing the interconnection request and conducting initial review studies related to interconnecting the requested generation.

Q. Are there other costs associated with interconnection with MidAmerican Energy?

A. Connection to MidAmerican Energy may include equipment such as isolating devices, system protection equipment, and construction of facilities required to accommodate the distributed generation. Additional costs may be required to cover facilities associated with connecting to MidAmerican Energy's electric distribution system.

Q. Does MidAmerican Energy offer rebates, tax incentives, or grants for customers who purchase renewable electrical energy systems?

A. No. However, customers can review the websites for the Iowa Energy Center or the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (DSIRE) to inquire about rebates, tax incentives, and grants for renewable electrical energy systems. The website for the Iowa Energy Center can be found at <http://www.energy.iastate.edu/> and the website for the DSIRE is located at <http://www.dsireusa.org/>.

Q. How will a customer know MidAmerican Energy's requirements for interconnection?

A. The engineering studies that MidAmerican Energy conducts as a result of the interconnection process will indicate the equipment needed for the interconnection. Any equipment and/or work required on MidAmerican Energy's system will be estimated and provided to the customer. Any equipment required by MidAmerican Energy to interconnect but on the customer's system will be indicated; the customer will be responsible for arranging for the purchase and installation of that equipment by a qualified electrical contractor.

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Q. Will MidAmerican Energy perform an economic analysis on wind or solar generation projects to determine a customer's potential payback and energy production?

- A. No. The customer is responsible for performing an economic and energy production analysis. If economics is a key factor in a distributed generation project, MidAmerican Energy notes that the Iowa Energy Center website contains information available to assist customers in determining estimated energy production of a wind or solar generation source. The website can be found at <http://www.energy.iastate.edu/>.

Q. Does MidAmerican Energy have a general guide for installing small wind turbines (under 500 kW)?

- A. MidAmerican Energy provides some suggestions below.
1. Clearly define your goal. Is it economic, environmental or otherwise?
 2. If your goal is economic or economics are important a customer should perform some type of economic analysis.
 3. Customers can check the websites for the Iowa Energy Center or the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (DSIRE) to inquire about rebates, tax incentives, and grants for renewable electrical energy systems. The website for the Iowa Energy Center can be found at <http://www.energy.iastate.edu/> and the website for the DSIRE is located at <http://www.dsireusa.org/>.
 4. Determine potential costs and other associated requirements. A wind turbine dealer or electrical consultant might be helpful in providing this information.
 5. Wind Turbine and solar calculators of energy production are available at the Iowa Energy Center website <http://www.energy.iastate.edu/>.
 6. A customer should gather one or more years of annual energy usage or estimated usage for comparison purposes.
 7. A customer should always check on local city codes and zoning requirements. Many cities have height restrictions. Some require a Professional Engineer to sign, seal, and stamp a proposed system.
 8. A customer should consider clearance requirements and what would happen if the unit fell over.
 9. Estimate the size and scope of the energy system.
 10. Call MidAmerican Energy at (888) 427-5632 to indicate you are interested.
 11. Upon request, MidAmerican Energy will send you an information sheet, a sample contract (not prepared for execution), and an interconnection request form for your review.
 12. Review the materials provided, fill out the interconnection request form, and return the engineering data for the proposed system to MidAmerican Energy.
 13. MidAmerican Energy will perform an engineering analysis of your system to determine if the electric grid can accept your electrical generation.

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14. All generators which are ultimately interconnected to MidAmerican Energy's electric distribution system require a signed contract between the generator and MidAmerican Energy, insurance, an engineering evaluation, and adequate safety/protective equipment. A customer should not commit to generator equipment purchase until MidAmerican Energy has determined the equipment is compatible with the proposed installation location and MidAmerican Energy's electric facilities.
15. A system impact analysis will be performed and returned to the customer. Any costs for equipment not required to serve the customer's load will be borne by the generator installation.
16. After a generation interconnection contract is signed by both parties, the customer should purchase and install their generator facilities.
17. Once the system is constructed, a MidAmerican Energy field commissioning test will need to be conducted to verify that the system has all of the needed protective and interconnection equipment and can operate properly.
18. MidAmerican Energy grants final permission to connect and operate in parallel with MidAmerican Energy's electric distribution system after the commissioning test is successful.