

SMALL BUSINESS GUIDE TO

APPLYING TO BECOME AN APPROVED SOLAR RETAILER

More than 70 per cent of all Approved Solar Retailers are small businesses. If you are applying to become an Approved Solar Retailer, it is best to put in the work now before you apply. Most of the time when companies are rejected it is because they haven't read the Solar Retailer Code of Conduct (the Code).

Don't try to sign up to a Code that you haven't read. Do your homework, print out a copy, get out a highlighter and read the fine print before applying.

If you are unsure if you meet the minimum 12-month criteria, please contact retailers@cleanenergycouncil.org.au

HELPFUL LINKS

For more information: www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/industry/retailers

Application requirements: www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/industry/retailers/apply

Application form: www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/industry/retailers/apply

Have you read the Solar Retailer Code of Conduct?

When a company becomes an Approved Solar Retailer, it becomes a Signatory to the Solar Retailer Code of Conduct. It is important that you understand the Code to ensure compliance and so that you know exactly what your company is signing up to.

You can download a PDF copy of the Solar Retailer Code of Conduct here cleanenergycouncil.org.au/approved-solar-retailer-code-of-conduct.pdf

The Code of Conduct aims to protect consumers and promote best practice for retail businesses selling solar and storage systems. Much of what the Code covers is what many small businesses are doing already.

Complying with the Code means having honest dealings with consumers and providing all the information needed to make an informed purchase decision. It also means protecting the rights of the consumer and the business and looking after consumers when something goes wrong.

ARE YOU READY TO APPLY?

Consider the following questions before submitting your application.

- **Does your solar quotation include all the information a consumer needs to make an informed purchase decision?** For most consumers, this will be the first time they are buying solar and it is a complicated purchase. The quote needs to be clear, informative and include the full specifications of the system, including the manufacturers and model numbers. See pages 9 and 10 of the Code for more information.
- **Does the contract include a full system design?** It is not necessary to use expensive design programs, but a full system design must be:
 - be site-specific and include
 - the proposed roof plan

- array orientation and tilt in degrees
- expected efficiency losses due to shading
- inverter location
- the system's site-specific estimated energy yield (i.e. the average daily performance estimate in kilowatt hours for each month of solar generation)

See page 9 & 10 of the Code for more information.

- **Do you provide the consumer with information about how they will benefit financially from the installation of solar?** For example, do you include estimates of export tariffs or return on investment figures. You must share the method used and include disclaimers if necessary. Please be aware that calculating a return on investment based on export tariffs can be problematic as some distributors limit export to the grid. See page 9 of the Code for more information.
- **Do you provide the consumer with an estimated timetable for supplying and installing the system?** Make sure the date is realistic and include it in the contract or quotation section. See page 10 of the Code for more information.
- **Do you tell the consumers about any additional costs that may arise at or after installation?** For example, fees for meter exchange. See pages 9 and 10 of the Code for more information.
- **Do you tell the consumers that their electricity contract/tariff rates may change?** Remember that the consumer is receiving a lot of new information when they are talking to you about solar. Include information about possible changes in the terms and conditions. See page 11 of the Code for more information
- **Do you explain to consumers how STCs work?** STCs are financial incentives (not rebates). Be upfront with the consumers about how STCs work and provide accurate information about the operation of the STC Clearing House. See page 11 of the Code for more information.
- **Does your refund policy comply with the minimum requirements of the Code?** You must provide a full refund in all circumstances outlined by the Code. See page 14 of the Code for more information.
- **Do you offer a minimum whole-of-system warranty period of five years?** Do you cover operation, performance, workmanship and all products? Have you checked that all warranty information including exclusions are compliant and consistent with the Code? See page 16 of the Code for more information.
- **Do you advise the consumer how to measure the performance of their system and appropriately maintain it?** See page 14 of the Code for more information.
- **Do you refer consumers to alternative finance for purchase of their system?** If so, you must check if that company holds an Australian Credit License. If they do not, you may need to provide the consumer with further information. Check page 12 of the Code for more information.
- **Are all the terms and conditions fair, transparent and easily understood by a residential consumer?** Are they legible and written in plain English?
- **Have you checked everything on your website and social media?** Are the photos compliant with CEC installation guidelines? Is the information accurate and truthful? See page 8 of the Code.

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- **Are you using all CEC logos correctly?** Remember that a company cannot be “accredited”. If using the accredited installer logo, ensure that the full name of the accredited installer is displayed directly below the logo. Refer to the CEC’s logo guidelines for more information.
- **Do you have a formal set of terms and conditions?** We understand that doing business on a handshake may have worked well in the past, but it offers no protection for your business if something goes wrong.

The CEC has a quotation and terms and conditions template available for purchase to help you get the best outcome for you and your customers.

For more information, please visit <https://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/industry/retailers/solar-sale-and-installation-agreement>

Please note: This list is not exhaustive and does not constitute legal advice. Compliance with this guide alone does not guarantee approval of an application.

If you have any questions please contact the Code team at retailers@cleanenergycouncil.org.au or by phoning 03 9929 4195, we’re here to help.