Grid tie inverters for home

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Getting the most out of your renewable energy system -solar panels, for example (we"ll base this article on solar energy, since it"s the most common renewable energy source used) to your home or office appliances, you need to build a fairly intricate system in order to ensure that your appliances are kept running: solar panels connected toa battery, and then finally connected to your various appliances.

Grid tie inverters are DC-AC power inverters which, likePure Sine Wave Inverters, convert theredundant DC power from solar panelsinto the AC power household appliances run on. However, a grid tie system can take the conversion one step further. Instead of sending the newly generated AC voltageinto a battery for storage, or directly into an appliance, they aretied into the grid(hence the name), and as such, work in tandem with the electricity sent to your home or office from the national grid.

In short, a grid tie inverter empowers home and business owners to use an alternative, renewable source of energy to power their buildings without having to resort to extensive rewiring or the use of batteries for storage. The best grid tie inverters match the (pure sine) waveform of the grid"s AC voltage, and ensure thatthey do not overload the grid with excess power- which can be especially problematic with solar panel systems during peak sunlight hours. In addition to saving you money on your power bills, such a set-up can actuallyearnyou money, depending on the subsidising initiatives in place in your country or state.

Having reviewed the market, we"ve determined the very best grid tie inverters to suit different requirements.

Grid tie inverters are a great cost-saving addition to your home solar system, but they don"t often come cheap. If budget is your primary concern, then you"ll be glad to know there is a trustworthy brand out there with a grid tie inverter just for you. Y& H have produced this micro-inverter to cover conversion of DC power up to 350 watts. Whilst not practical for any particularly large solar setups, this budget-friendly inverter is perfect for the first-time solar panel owner, who"s looking to integrate just a little renewable energy into their house"s daily electricity consumption.

For those of us looking to harness as much solar power as possible, or for those wishing to build upon an already well-established solar system, you"ll need something that can handle the impressive wattage output of your panels. When it comes to power, there is simply no stronger grid tie inverter out there than the SMA Sunny Boy 5000W inverter. At 5000W, this mammoth can handle just about anything your solar panels can throw at it, and shouldn"t face any problems even during peak sunlight hours around midday. For any homes and businesses looking to profit off the installation of a grid tie inverter, an inverter like the Sunny Boy is probably your best bet (provided, of course, that you have the solar panel set-up to back it up).

The Marsrock inverter is an impressive-looking piece of kit. With an in-built power limiter and MPPT controller (WiFi optional), it is designed to maximise the efficiency of your solar system and extract the

maximum energy from it at all times, feeding that energy in a clean, pure sine wave directly into your local energy grid. At 1000W peak (900W continuous), it"s also powerful enough to handle medium-large solar panel arrays, and will help save you money on your electricity bills whilst paying off in the long run, should your home consume less energy than it produces. The Marsrock has several innate protection features, such as over-current protection, thermal protection, reverse polarity protection, and anti-island protection. Budget-wise the Marsrock is a mid-market buy.

There are three types of inverters you can find on the market: chopped, square wave, and pure sine wave inverters. For our purposes, we"ll only look at pure sine wave inverters. Earlier models preferred the chopped and square wave mechanics, but these waste a lot of power, are prone to overheating, and - worst of all - can do damage to the grid if plugged directly into it. This is because in order to feed renewable electricity into the grid, it has to match identically the voltage and frequency of the electricity already on the grid. Mismatches can cause damage and power outages.

Pure sine wave grid tie inverters are located between yourrenewable arrayand home. The electricity produced by renewable technology is Direct Current (a straight line, going only one way), whereas the grid"s electricity is Alternating Current (a wavy line going both directions). A grid tie inverter therefore converts DC from your renewable sources into AC for the grid, and does so in three stages.

Firstly, a complex system of integrated circuits oscillates the Direct Current from thewind turbine. The current isoscillated to a particular frequencyto match grid electricity. In the US, this frequency is 60Hz (or 60 full waves per second). Once oscillated, the current is now AC; however, the waves of the newly created current are too low to power anything of note. Thus, this AC wave is next amplified, until the waves reach peaks powerful enough to be useful. Finally, the pure sine wave grid tie inverter alters the current to ensure that its voltage matches the voltage of the grid, in effect copy-catting the grid into which it is plugged.

A grid tie inverter, on top of actually inverting your DC electricity as described above, continually monitors the grid to ensure that the AC the inverter produces meets grid requirements. It also monitors how much electricity your home is using, ensuring not to overload the grid with too much electricity (especially essential during peak production hours for renewable energies like wind and solar).

Many grid tie inverters come with additional features such as wireless monitoring, in-built protection systems, Bluetooth controls, LED displays and more.

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