

Homeowner rights on PV systems maintenance work

Let's say you owned a PV system and got a call one day from your installer, warning you of a problem. Would you know what to say next?

The first thing you should find out is, what exactly is the problem and when did it start? For example, if it's an Enphase system, you can ask when this problem occurred and have them send you a screenshot of the event. This information is readily available in the event log of an Enphase system, including the date it went down.

Why would you ask for this? Well, there are many companies out there who did not originally do maintenance and are only now getting into the business. These companies may be going back through the monitoring logs of systems they installed to look for problems they can "solve."

They may claim that they always monitored your system, but if the problem is more than a month old, I would question them about it. I've even seen cases where the breakdown occurred more than 2 years prior. You have the right to ask them why it took so long to contact you and ask about getting back the energy that was lost in the interim.

Make sure you check your installation agreement because if it states that the company will monitor and maintain your system, you have grounds for a claim.

I even heard of a company that called up one of our clients, stated that they found a microinverter down, and told her that they had already started the Return Material Authorization (RMA). When our client argued that she did not give authorization, the installer company told her they didn't need it. They claimed that anytime they find an issue, they can start the RMA immediately and come out to do the work...at your cost, of course.

These are the predatory practices that are commonplace in the industry now, and you as a consumer need to know your rights. It's your choice who you want to take care of your system, especially if the warranty is out-of-date and they're going to charge you for the work. Would you really trust a company that hadn't contacted you in years and then all of sudden alerted you of problems that had been going on all along?