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Use Solar energy to save you money. Check this Out!

<http://tinyurl.com/SOLARfreeEnergy>

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If you are keen to create your own Solar Energy House you may well have considered DIY solar panels. Well, while I applaud your desire to have a solar energy house, let me warn you that you will not save money by making your own solar panels. Lets look at why.

### Cost of a DIY Solar Panel

Lets ignore the cost of your time. Here is a list of the materials required:

- Clear plexiglass or low iron solar glass 2ft x 4ft x 1/4in \$34 or more
- 3/4in 2ft x 4ft plywood panel \$23
- Solar cell kit (eBay) \$119, comprising:

- 50 Solar cells each 3in x 6in, 1.75w, pre-tabbed
- 10ft tabbing wire and 10ft bus wire,
- Flux pen and solder

- Peg board 2 panels 2ft x 2ft \$5
- Clear silicone caulk/sealant \$3
- Junction box \$5
- Paint, stainless screws, wood for frame \$10
- Diodes \$3

Total cost \$202. Take off \$20 for the 10 extra solar cells that are not required, gives a total of \$182 for the materials to make a 60 watt solar panel. This works out at \$3 per watt.

### Cost of Factory Made Panels

If you do a casual search on the Internet, most solar panels work out at \$5 - \$7.50 per watt. But we ferreted around and found a 120watt panel for \$358 retail, equivalent to \$2.98 per watt. There are also a number of wholesalers willing to sell direct to the public, and minimum order quantities can be as low as two panels. We found a 225watt solar panel wholesale for \$549 (min order 2 panels), equivalent to \$2.44 per watt.

### Warnings & Dangers of DIY Solar Panels

Also, if you are thinking about making your own solar panels to cut the cost of your solar energy house, please be aware of the following:

- In the US, you will NOT be allowed to connect your home made solar panels to the grid. If you want your solar energy house to be connected to the grid, you must use solar panels with UL certification. Many countries have similar regulations.
- Commercially manufactured solar panels come with 25 year performance guarantees. DIY solar panels have no guarantees and will probably last just a few years at best.

- With any home made solar panel there is a risk of fire from poor quality soldering. If your DIY solar panel ignited and resulted in fire damage to your house, your insurance company might be a little reluctant to pay out for a fire caused by a solar panel that did not have UL certification.
- And the final nail in the coffin of a home made solar energy house: in the US, home made solar panels will NOT qualify for the significant rebates and tax credits that are available.

If you want solar panels for your solar energy house and want a system that is safe, reliable, qualifies for rebates and will really cut your electricity bills, forget DIY. DIY can be a great introduction to understanding what it means to have a solar energy house, but it is not a viable alternative to factory made solar panels.

#### Make a Solar Panel as a Science or DIY Project

However, if you want to make your own solar panel as a science project, this can be fun, satisfying and very rewarding. On completion you will also have a solar panel you can show off to your friends and something you could use to provide light for a yard, shed or outbuilding.

If you want to make a solar panel as a science project, consider buying one of the "how too make solar panels" guides. Some of these are very good and do an excellent job of showing you (they have some very good videos) what to do, how to do it and when to do. Yes, a guide will add \$40 - \$50 to the cost, but that could be money very well spent, just don't fall for all the marketing hype!

#### Conclusion

If you want a solar energy home and to reduce your electricity bills, forget the DIY route. But, although you won't save money or reduce your electricity bill, making a solar panel as part of a science project should be very satisfying and educational. If you do not want to spend the \$40 - \$50 for one of the DIY solar panel guides, there is a lot of information on the Internet. I wish every success with your Solar Energy House.

Article written by Phil Paine

For more information on having a Solar Energy House, renewable energy and an independent, objective review of the leading "how to make solar panels" guides, see solar panel home.

Article Source:

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