

Battery Storage Buying Guide

With so many options becoming available with battery storage, it really pays to give some thought to which type, brand and size to buy. Most people are opting for big name brands and storage capacity of between 6.5 - 14kWh and at this stage, most people are buying lithium-ion technology, such as Tesla, LG Chem, Enphase and Samsung (pictured).



But what are the important considerations or questions you need to ask before buying a battery storage unit.

Here are the big ones:

1. Do I want to stay connected to the grid? Of course, most people answer 'No!', but the cost of disconnecting completely from the grid is quite expensive (usually starting at \$40,000), so most households will stay connected and install a hybrid system (where you stay connected to the grid and the grid becomes your back-up, rather than your primary source of energy). Hybrid is a much cheaper option, starting at around \$7,900.

2. How much power do I need at any one time? eg. if you want to run your mamma air-conditioner from your battery at night, there are some batteries that allow you to draw as much as 11kWh at any one time, whereas others are limited to 2.5kWh of power being drawn at any one time.

3. How much actual storage do I need? If you tend to use most of your power during the day or your overall electricity consumption isn't that high, you may be able to get away with installing a smaller (and cheaper) battery unit.

4. What's the depth of discharge? This means what's the lowest I can drain my battery before it needs to start recharging again. Some batteries allow you to almost completely drain the battery, whereas others need to keep a minimum of 20% capacity at all times. This means you don't have as much usable power you can draw on.

5. Do I need a blackout-proof battery? If you want to run certain appliances during a blackout, only some batteries allow you to do this. Some will allow you just to draw down from the battery in a blackout, while others allow you to produce solar energy and draw down from your battery, whereas others won't let you do either.

6. Where will I position my battery? It's really critical to have your battery located within around 15m of your meter box. Indoors, the battery can only go in a non-habitable room, like a laundry or garage. Keep in mind that some batteries are weather-proof and others aren't. None like being in direct sunlight.

7. How important is monitoring capability to me? If receiving warnings and alerts about your system on your phone or laptop is an important function for you, some batteries and inverters offer much more monitoring than others.

8. How bankable is the battery manufacturer? Put simply, this means 'how likely is the manufacturer going to be in business over the long term?' There are Chinese battery manufacturers popping up like daisies, but it pays to choose a company that's been manufacturing batteries for at least 5 years and is a large multinational.

9. Does the battery manufacturer have offices in Australia? Imagine if your installer is no longer around and you have a problem with your battery. You want to be able to call on a local office to fix or replace your battery. If you deal with manufacturers that only have offices overseas, you may be asked to ship back your (70-100kg) battery to the country of origin at your own expense!

10. Who's going to install my battery? We can't emphasise the importance of this enough, as lithium-ion batteries (the technology that's looking to dominate the battery market) is extremely flammable if not installed correctly.



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