Preparing for the NSW Emergency Backstop Mechanism

The NSW Emergency Backstop Mechanism is a critical, last resort protection, required by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), to keep our grid secure during emergency scenarios. The NSW Government is partnering with NSW distribution networks Ausgrid, Endeavour Energy and Essential Energy to prepare industry for these changes, including the development of a new Consumer Energy Resources (CER) Installer Portal.

To comply with these new obligations, from late-2026, there are additional steps solar retailers and installers must take when installing new and upgraded rooftop solar systems.

What's changing for solar businesses in NSW?

From late-2026, when installing new and upgraded solar systems (up to 200kW in size) in NSW, solar retailers and installers will need to take the following additional steps:

1

Compliant equipment

Make sure the equipment being installed is compliant with the Australian Standard "Common Smart Inverter Profile – Australia" (CSIP-AUS).

2

CER Installer Portal

Use the new CER Installer Portal to confirm installation details, and complete requirements for the Distributed Energy Resources Register and Certificate of Compliance for Electricity Work.

3

Device registration

Register the installation through your device manufacturer's app or registration portal. Device registration will now be mandatory.

4

Capability testing

During commissioning, use the CER Installer Portal to verify that the installation can successfully communicate with the relevant distribution network's server via the internet.

How to prepare for these changes

There are actions you can take now to prepare your business for these upcoming changes:

Confirm that your proposed equipment complies: To meet CSIP-AUS requirements, an inverter must be listed on the Clean Energy Council's Approved Inverters List and use a Software Communication Client that is approved for use with that specific inverter.

Complete the training: Complete the free online training available through the Clean Energy Council. Completing this course will earn you 20 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points.

Exemptions may apply to device registration and capability testing. Your distribution network's Permission/Intent to Connect and the CER Installer Portal will indicate if this is the case.

Stay informed:

AEMO Managing Minimum System Load

NSW Government Emergency Backstop Mechanism

NSW Government NSW CER Installer Portal

NSW GOVERNMENT

Ausgrid

Endeavour Energy

Essential Energy

Frequently asked questions

1 When will these changes happen?

The NSW Emergency Backstop Mechanism requirements will be introduced gradually throughout late 2026, in parallel with the NSW Government's CER Installer Portal.

2 What installations are subject to these additional steps?

The NSW Emergency Backstop Mechanism will apply to all new and upgraded solar inverter systems up to 200kW. Existing systems, some warranty replacements and the installation of batteries will not be affected. Exemptions will also apply to customers within embedded networks and those who do not have practicable access to the internet.

3 What requirements will be placed on larger solar systems?

Systems larger than 200kW must still be 'emergency backstop enabled' (i.e. capable of remote curtailment). While many of these larger systems will likely still use the CER Installer Portal and CSIP-AUS as part of their connection process, the relevant distribution network will work directly with the customer to determine the most appropriate technology to enable the emergency backstop requirements.

4 What is CSIP-AUS?

CSIP-AUS stands for Common Smart Inverter Profile – Australia, an Australian standard that enables compliant equipment to communicate seamlessly and in real-time with a distribution network's server via the internet. For more information, visit the CSIP-AUS website.

5 How do I find CSIP-AUS compliant equipment?

To identify CSIP-AUS compliant equipment, check the Clean Energy Council's approved "Inverters with Software Communication Clients" list. This indicates that the equipment has passed required testing and certification processes.

6 What is the NSW CER Installer Portal?

The CER Installer Portal is a digital tool that will make it easier for installers anywhere in NSW to confirm the installation details of new or upgraded rooftop solar systems.

The portal will:

- provide a single confirmation and testing process for installers across all three NSW distribution networks
- support the introduction of flexible export limits in NSW, enabling customers to install larger systems and export more solar energy to the grid
- automatically share data with AEMO's Distributed Energy Resources (DER) Register and the NSW Building Commission's Certificate of Compliance for Electrical Work (CCEW) system.

7 What is the capability test?

The capability test is a required step for solar installation compliance and must be successfully completed to meet NSW Emergency Backstop Mechanism obligations. This short, on-site test verifies that the installed solar system can communicate reliably over the internet and is ready to respond to remote control signals from the relevant distribution network's server.

8 What if there is no internet available on site?

Sites without practicable access to the internet are eligible to apply for an exemption from NSW Emergency Backstop Mechanism requirements. These exemption requests will be independently assessed by the relevant distribution network.

Any system not connected to the internet, regardless of the reason, must have its exports manually capped at 1.5kW. The installer will need to ensure this export limit is in place.

9 Can I still complete the capability test without permanent internet on site?

Yes. If a site does not have permanent internet access, the capability test can be completed using a temporary internet connection like a mobile hotspot. In these situations, the system's exports will be capped at 1.5kW until a permanent internet connection is established at the site.

If the capability test cannot be successfully completed, the installer will need to ensure the 1.5kW export limit is in place.

10 How do I talk to my customers about emergency backstop?

You can explain to customers that the Emergency Backstop Mechanism is a last-resort protection, required by AEMO, designed to keep the grid stable during rare emergency periods of very high solar output and low demand. It will allow NSW distribution networks to temporarily reduce rooftop solar exports to the grid or pause generation, but only when instructed by AEMO. Similar mechanisms are already in place in South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria.

Reassure your customers that:

- the backstop is expected to be used very rarely, and only under emergency conditions when instructed by AEMO;
- it will not affect the supply of electricity to their home; and
- their system will continue to operate normally outside of these rare events.

Visit the NSW Government's Emergency Backstop Mechanism webpage to download fact sheets that you can share with customers.

Emergency Backstop Mechanism

CER Installer Portal