

Solar Panel Schools – Training the Renewable Energy Industry

Solar power – the dream of renewable energy is realized; how far we go now is all up to the limits of current technology and our imagination... and training. There are many levels of training, from photovoltaic (PV) panel installation to research and development, and all will come in handy in the very near future.

The demand for solar energy has grown about 30% per year over the past fifteen years. While the growth rate has slowed somewhat from its initial boom, it hasn't levelled at all. Even though the U.S. economy began struggling in early/mid 2008, solar energy companies topped the list of the 2008 largest venture capital investments; Nanosolar Inc., a leader in the development of solar-cell technology, topped the list with a whopping \$299,999,700 in capital investments. (Dallas News.com)

New California legislation, passed last summer, allows solar photovoltaic systems to be bought on a loan, paid for by various county and city general fund tax dollars. According to the North County Times, "homeowners can finance solar installations over twenty years instead of forking out tens of thousands of dollars up front."

What does all of this mean for careers in solar power? That training is essential, and the best time for finding solar panel schools to teach you the trade is now. As the demand for solar energy rises, so does the demand for solar installations, which, in turn, increases the demand for solar installers. Schools that teach this trade are few and far between, and fill up quickly.

Why? In general, solar panel schools advertise to businesses instead of the individual. The amount of training, as well as the hands-on portion, necessitates smaller "classroom" sizes. Consider a single mid-sized corporation with three hundred electricians that want to move into solar panel installation. Those three hundred trainees will quickly fill even multiple classrooms for the term they've chosen.

Does this mean that an individual can't find placement in solar schools? Absolutely not. For most training facilities, the major prerequisite is that you have knowledge in electrical systems, general contracting or fields related to solar PV installation. These courses are usually training intensive, with dedicated teachers on hand to guide the students through each step. A good grasp on the technology through a well-constructed technical training program is always a good bet, especially when dealing with electrical charges!

Training from solar panel schools isn't all about installation, however. By the time you're done with just the entry level NABCEP Knowledge of PV Systems course, you will learn enough about solar panels to:

- recognize individual PV systems and how to integrate them
- have a working knowledge of policies and regulations
- be able to estimate the cost, sizing and placement of the PV system

In short, solar panel schools will give you the training to, not only install and maintain these systems, but to be a knowledgeable spokesperson for your business.

About the Author

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