

Solar Installer interview questions

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What to expect

Solar Installer interviews mix hands-on trade questions with safety and customer-facing scenarios. Employers want to see that you can plan a job properly, work safely at height, and handle the electrical side without cutting corners, since a lot of the risk in this trade sits in details like earthing and structural load.

- **Process:** Walk-throughs of how you'd approach a job from site assessment to commissioning.
- **Safety:** Questions on working at heights, electrical isolation, and SafeWork requirements.
- **Technical:** Specifics on wiring, testing, and compliance with Australian standards.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of problem solving, teamwork, or handling a difficult job.
- **Client-facing:** How you'd explain the system and its maintenance to a homeowner or business client.

Expect a short chat about your licences and SAA accreditation status first, then a run through practical scenarios (roof assessment, wiring faults), followed by a safety-specific segment, and finishing with questions about working with customers or other trades on site.

1. Walk me through how you'd assess a roof before starting a solar installation.

Why they ask

Confirms you understand structural load, orientation, and shading assessment before any hardware goes on the roof.

How to structure your answer

Describe the process in order: site inspection, measurements, structural checks, then how you'd flag issues before committing to a layout.

Example answer

"I start by checking the roof structure and rafter spacing to confirm it can carry the panel and mounting load, then measure the usable area and note any shading from trees or nearby buildings at different times of day. I check the roof pitch and orientation against the client's energy goals, and if anything looks marginal structurally, I get a written sign-off from an engineer before proceeding. Only once that's settled do I plan the string layout and mounting points."

2. Tell me about a time you found a fault or safety issue partway through an installation. What did you do?

Why they ask

Tests judgement and honesty when something goes wrong mid-job, which is common with older roofs or unclear wiring.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"On one job I was drilling mounting points when I found the existing roof battens were more deteriorated than expected. I stopped work immediately rather than pushing on, told the site supervisor, and we brought in extra bracing before continuing. It added half a day to the job, but the client and builder both appreciated that we caught it before the panels went up rather than after."

3. How do you isolate and test a circuit before working on it, and what standards are you working to?

Why they ask

Direct check of electrical safety knowledge and familiarity with Australian wiring rules.

How to structure your answer

Explain your standard isolation and testing procedure step by step, naming the relevant standards.

Example answer

"I isolate the array at the DC isolator and the AC side at the switchboard, then use a multimeter to confirm zero voltage before touching any wiring, following AS/NZS 3000. Once work is done, I test insulation resistance, earth continuity, and open-circuit voltage on each string before reconnecting, checking everything against AS/NZS 5033 for PV array requirements before I sign off."

4. A customer calls two weeks after installation saying their system isn't producing as much power as expected. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

Scenario question testing troubleshooting under time pressure and customer communication.

How to structure your answer

Outline the judgement call: what you'd check first, how you'd prioritise, and how you'd communicate with the customer.

Example answer

"I'd first ask what the monitoring app is showing and check for obvious causes like recent weather or new shading from something like a tree that's grown. If nothing obvious turns up, I'd book a site visit to check individual string voltages and inverter fault logs rather than guessing over the phone. I'd keep the customer updated on what I'm checking and roughly when I expect to have an answer, since most complaints get worse when people feel ignored."

5. What's your experience with battery storage systems, and how does wiring them differ from a standard grid-tied PV install?

Why they ask

Battery storage is a growing part of the role and employers want to know your knowledge is current.

How to structure your answer

Give a direct technical comparison, then a specific example if you have one.

Example answer

"Battery systems add DC coupling or AC coupling considerations depending on the setup, plus extra isolation and protection requirements around the battery itself. I've wired hybrid inverter systems where the battery sits on the DC side, which needs careful attention to cable sizing and earthing compared to a simple grid-tied array. I always check the manufacturer's install manual closely since battery wiring rules vary more between brands than standard PV does."

6. How do you manage a job site when you're working alongside an electrician or another trade?

Why they ask

Checks teamwork and communication, since installers often coordinate with licensed electricians on grid connection.

How to structure your answer

Behavioural, brief STAR or general example.

Example answer

"I make sure we agree upfront on who's doing what, especially around the switchboard connection which usually needs the electrician's licence. On a recent job I finished the panel and DC wiring ahead of schedule, so I helped prep the isolator locations the electrician needed rather than standing around, which kept the whole install on schedule for a same-day commission."