Flexible Load Battery Program

Frequently Asked Questions

VEC is offering an incentive to members who sign up to allow VEC to use their home battery a limited number of times per year when we are anticipating peak demand for electricity. Members can enroll their battery and choose either a monthly bill credit, or an upfront payment and lower monthly bill credit. Below are some frequently asked questions.

What models of batteries are currently eligible for the program?
Generac PWRcell
Tesla Powerwall
Sonnen
Note: Other batteries may be added in the future.

Am I eligible to participate?
If you have one of the eligible batteries listed above, have not enrolled your battery in another demand response program, and are a VEC member, you are eligible to participate.

How much is the incentive?
Members can choose between two options: 1) a monthly bill credit of $6.40 per kilowatt, or 2) an upfront payment of $268 per kilowatt and a monthly bill credit of $3.20 per kilowatt.

For example, a 5-kW battery in this program would have the following options. Option #1 would be a $32/month bill credit. Option #2 would be an upfront payment of $1,340 and a $16/month bill credit.

Does it matter whether I already have a battery or am installing one now?
No, the incentive and eligibility are the same.

Will I be notified in advance of each peak event?
Yes, VEC will notify participants at least 4-hours in advance of any peak event.

How often do peak events occur and how long do they last?
Batteries enrolled in the program will be called on no more than 40 hours per month. Each peak event will last between 2-4 hours.

Will I be able to opt-out of individual peak events? If so, how will that impact my incentive?
Yes, participants will be able to opt-out of individual peak events. If a participant opt-out of the event that is determined to be the peak hour for any given month, VEC will add an equivalent charge to the bill the next month to zero out the credit for that month.

How much power will be left in the battery at all times?
We will not draw the battery down below 20 percent of its capacity, unless the member sets a deeper or complete discharge.

What happens when a major storm or other outage event coincides with a peak event?
We understand that members' main reason for installing a battery is to use it for backup power in the event of an outage. We will not draw down batteries before a major weather event that could cause outages. However, outages can happen unexpectedly, and we cannot guarantee that batteries will be fully charged when an outage occurs.

What happens if the battery doesn't perform during a peak event?
We will contact the participant if we detect a connection issue and work with them to resolve it. If the battery doesn't perform during a given month, VEC will add an equivalent charge to the bill the next month to zero out the credit for that month.

Who can I talk to about purchase and installation of a battery?
The installation depends on the type of battery. Interested members can visit manufacturer specific websites or Renewable Energy Vermont's member directory and search for businesses that offer residential storage services in your area.

Generac: https://www.generac.com/dealer-locator
Tesla: https://www.tesla.com/support/certified-installers-powerwall
Sonnen: https://sonnenusa.com/en/find-partner/

What if I can't use the bill credit because I have net metering credits?
Unlike net metering credits, the flexible load battery credits will never expire. The credits can offset charges that net metering credits cannot like the monthly customer charge and energy efficiency charges.

When total program specific credits exceed $100.00, but not more than once a year, participating members may request reimbursement of the credits in the form of a check.

What happens if I decide to leave the program before the 10-year period ends?
Participants can leave the program at any time. Those who elected the upfront payment option would have to pay back a prorated share of that upfront incentive, depending on how long they remained enrolled in the program. Otherwise, nothing would be owed to VEC.

Will participating in this program impact how I can use my battery?
Potentially, yes. If your battery is paired with a solar array and you have taken the Investment Tax Credit, you are required to charge your battery exclusively from your solar array for 5-years. If VEC calls a peak event and dispatches your battery during a stretch of cloudy weather, it may take several days for your battery to charge back up. During that time period, you may not have a lot of energy in your battery for back-up related purposes. However, VEC We will not draw down batteries before a major weather event that could cause outages. However, outages can happen unexpectedly, and we cannot guarantee that batteries will be fully charged when an outage occurs.

What happens if I sell my house?
If the battery remains at the property, the new owner would be able to enroll in the program, but they would not be obligated to. Participants who elected the upfront payment option would have to pay back a prorated share of that upfront incentive, depending on how long they remained enrolled in the program. Otherwise, nothing would be owed to VEC.

How do I apply?
To apply for this program, please visit the following webpage and review and complete the terms and conditions document. If you have any questions during that process, please send an e-mail to flexload@vermontelectric.coop

How does this benefit the co-op as a whole?
Many of VEC's costs are based on the annual peak hour for New England and the monthly peak hour for Vermont. By using battery-stored power to reduce our peak during these times, we can lower costs for all members. Because electric generation is typically also dirtiest during these periods when older oil and gas fired plants are running, batteries can also help create a cleaner electric supply.