

SolarInnovate Energy Solutions

Photovoltaic solar panels close up



Overview

How do solar photovoltaic cells work?

Solar photovoltaic cells are grouped in panels, and panels can be grouped into arrays of different sizes to power water pumps, power individual homes, or provide utility-scale electricity generation. Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory (copyrighted).

What is a photovoltaic (PV) cell?

A photovoltaic (PV) cell, commonly called a solar cell, is a nonmechanical device that converts sunlight directly into electricity. Some PV cells can convert artificial light into electricity. Sunlight is composed of photons, or particles of solar energy.

What is a third type of photovoltaic technology?

A third type of photovoltaic technology is named after the elements that compose them. III-V solar cells are mainly constructed from elements in Group III—e.g., gallium and indium—and Group V—e.g., arsenic and antimony—of the periodic table. These solar cells are generally much more expensive to manufacture than other technologies.

Where can I find information about solar photovoltaic energy?

For more information about solar photovoltaic energy, visit the following resources: Solar Photovoltaic Technology Basics (U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy) Energy Kids: Solar Photovoltaic (U.S. Energy Information Administration) Energy Saver: Using Solar Electricity at Home (U.S. Department of Energy).

What is photovoltaic research?

Photovoltaic research is more than just making a high-efficiency, low-cost solar cell. Homeowners and businesses must be confident that the solar panels they install will not degrade in performance and will continue to

reliably generate electricity for many years.

What are new photovoltaic technologies?

Solar cell researchers at NREL and elsewhere are also pursuing many new photovoltaic technologies—such as solar cells made from organic materials, quantum dots, and hybrid organic-inorganic materials (also known as perovskites). These next-generation technologies may offer lower costs, greater ease of manufacture, or other benefits.

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