

Solar Real Cost of Labour Calculator

What you pay a solar tech and what an hour of their time actually costs you are two different numbers. See your true cost per billable hour once payroll burden and non-billable time are in.

FREE TOOL

SOLAR

PRINT OR FILL ON SCREEN

BUILT BY FERVOR STUDIO

HOW IT WORKS

The math behind the number

What you pay a solar tech and what an hour of their time actually costs you are two different numbers. The real cost is the burdened wage, meaning pay plus taxes, insurance, and benefits, divided by the share of paid time that is actually billable. Non-billable hours spread the same cost over fewer billable hours, so the true number sits well above the wage.

THE DEFAULTS

Solar benchmarks for 2026

The worksheet starts from the sourced figures below, so the first number you see is realistic. You then replace each one with your own.

BENCHMARK	TYPICAL VALUE
Average job value	\$25,000
Gross margin	30%
Net profit margin	12%
Median field-tech wage	\$24.93/hr
Payroll burden	30%
Billable utilization	65%
Billed labour rate	\$125/hr

BENCHMARK	TYPICAL VALUE
Close rate	20%
Marketing % of revenue	20%

YOUR WORKSHEET

Fill in your own numbers

Write your figures into the blank column, on paper or on screen. The typical column is only a starting point, so replace it with what your business actually runs.

INPUT	YOUR NUMBER	TYPICAL
Hourly wage What you pay per hour		\$25
Payroll burden % Taxes, insurance, benefits, paid time off		30%
Billable utilization % Share of paid hours that are billable		65%
Overhead per billable hour Tools, vehicle, and admin allocated per hour		\$15

OUTPUT	HOW IT IS BUILT	YOUR RESULT
Burdened wage	$\text{wage} \times (1 + \text{burden} / 100)$	
True cost per billable hour	$\text{burdened} / (\text{utilization} / 100) + \text{overhead}$	

WORKED EXAMPLE

A Solar example

Hourly wage	\$25
Payroll burden %	30%
Billable utilization %	65%
Overhead per billable hour	\$15
Burdened wage	\$32
True cost per billable hour	\$65

WHERE THE DEFAULTS COME FROM

BLS OEWS May 2024 – Solar Photovoltaic Installers (47-2231), wages & percentiles

BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook – Solar Photovoltaic Installers (median pay, outlook)

O*NET OnLine – Solar Photovoltaic Installers 47-2231.00 (2025 BLS wage cross-check)

SolarReviews – Solar Panel Cost 2026 (avg system \$21,816 / 7.2 kW / \$3.03/W)

EnergySage – Solar Panel Cost (avg 12 kW system \$30,505 / \$2.58/W)

Wood Mackenzie – US residential solar customer-acquisition costs (\$0.60/W 2025, +40% in 2026)

LumberFi – Solar Panel Business: Overhead Costs & Profit Margins (20-40% gross, 10-25% net)

ServiceTitan – 19 Key Field Service Metrics (utilization, close rate, gross margin benchmarks)

FieldEdge – Technician Utilization Benchmarks (70-85% healthy)

SmartBarrel – Labor Burden in Construction (25-40% on top of base wage)

Sunvoy – Solar Close Rates by Lead Source (appointment-to-sale benchmarks)

FREE FOR QUALIFYING CONTRACTORS

Want the same read on your own website?

The Site Inspection scores your contractor site on 100 points and shows you, with evidence, where ready-to-book homeowners slip through before they ever call. You get a Fervor Grade, a ranked fix list, and a dollar estimate on every finding.

[Book your Site Inspection](#)

fervorstudio.ca/site-inspection