

# News Release



July 2014



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## TAKING THE RIGHT SOLAR DECISION

*Now that the Government has finally launched the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme, offering homeowners payments to offset the cost of installing low carbon systems in their properties, there will be renewed interest in installing solar thermal water heating systems, but the Building & Engineering Services Association (B&ES) say homeowners should not "rush in" but should take time to make the right decision.*

**16 July 2014** – Now that the Government has finally launched the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme, offering homeowners payments to offset the cost of installing low carbon systems in their properties, there is bound to be renewed interest in installing solar thermal water heating systems; it is one of the four renewable energy technologies eligible under the scheme, with payments to householders fixed at 19.2p/kWh. The guaranteed payments are made quarterly over seven years for households in England, Wales and Scotland (Northern Ireland has its own RHI scheme).

But the Building & Engineering Services Association (B&ES), who operate the free consumer advice service the Heating Helpline ([www.heatinghelpline.org.uk](http://www.heatinghelpline.org.uk)), say that homeowners should not “rush in” but should take time to make the right decision.

David Frise, Head of Sustainability at B&ES, comments, “Before beginning a solar panel installation it is important to give a lot of thought to location in order to ensure maximum efficiency from the panels. Solar panels need to be installed so that they are exposed to as much direct sunlight as possible over the course of a day. It is also important to install solar panels in a location where they won’t be partially or completely shaded during part of the day. The more direct sunlight that is shining on solar panels, the more effective they are.

“System performances will be improved if the pumps and timers are set correctly, and experience has shown that a lack of insulation on the hot water tank and pipes has led to lower performances because of heat losses. As a general rule we advise that every step is taken to first improve the insulation of the home before an investment in solar panels is made.

“Solar installers also vary widely in how well they will take care of your roof during the solar installation process. Solar panel mounting will invariably require some amount of roof penetration, so good solar installers will know how to use proper flashing and sealants to ensure that your roof integrity is maintained.

“It’s also a myth that solar installations are maintenance-free. Some panels require regular checks of the unit and connections, or a wipe of the panel glass with mild detergent.

“Finally, it’s also worth noting that to be eligible for payments under the RHI scheme the installation must be installed by an engineer registered with the MCS (Microgeneration Certification Scheme). Only highly reputable, well established companies will have registered with the MCS”.

For more information about renewable energy technologies and the Government's new domestic RHI scheme, contact the free Heating Helpline on 0800 810 8303 or visit the website at: [www.heatinghelpline.org.uk](http://www.heatinghelpline.org.uk). Additional useful information on solar installations is available at: <http://bit.ly/Wco8Ch>.

*Ends*

**Issued on behalf of B&ES (the Building & Engineering Services Association) by Next Step Marketing Ltd**

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Notes to editors

Since its formation in 1904, B&ES, the Building & Engineering Services Association (formerly the HVCA) has represented the interests of companies engaged in a wide range of building and engineering services including domestic heating and renewable technologies.

B&ES members are subject to regular, third-party inspection and assessment of their technical competence and commercial capability, carried out by an independent certification body at least every three years.

B&ES members who undertake gas installations are registered with Gas Safe – the gas safety watchdog body – and are also members of TrustMark, the Government-endorsed scheme designed to direct customers towards reliable tradespeople.

B&ES operates the *Heating Helpline* ([www.heatinghelpline.org.uk](http://www.heatinghelpline.org.uk)) to provide consumers with free, impartial advice on every aspect of home heating.