

Expedited Validation Option for DER Contractors

Customers are always anxious to begin generating their own electricity as soon as possible after their system is installed. That's why we're piloting a new Expedited Validation Option (EVO) for customers and their qualifying contractors on O'ahu.

What is the Expedited Validation Option?

The EVO allows contractors that maintain a strong track record of accurate and complete validation submittals and demonstrate compliance with all applicable installation requirements to bypass the validation process for DER projects less than 30kW. Instead, contractors will submit an attestation signed by both the contractor and customer confirming that all installation requirements, including the appropriate advanced inverter settings, have been done completely and correctly. Once we receive the attestation, we'll request the meter change and the customer will be interconnected.

So, what's the catch?

There is no catch as long as everything you've attested to is correct. We will conduct regular spot audits of systems after receipt of an attestation to verify that everything matches. If our audits reveal no major discrepancies between the attestations and the systems over the quarter, contractors will be allowed to continue using the EVO for the next three months. If we find major issues, you'll have to go back to submitting validation packets for every system for the next quarter.

You can easily work your way back to earning the EVO the way you had it in the first place: By submitting accurate and complete validation packets and demonstrating compliance with all applicable installation requirements. However, you won't qualify for EVO again until you can demonstrate sustained validation accuracy over the three month cycle.

How it works.

The EVO is intended to provide contractors with a choice to help speed up the process for customers and improve their satisfaction with the overall service.

Beginning April 2, 2018, we'll begin the initial EVO certification cycle in which we will start "scoring" validation packets. This means we'll keep a record of each packet received for accuracy and completeness. We'll track errors, omissions and discrepancies as either minor or major much like we do for validations today. At the end of the quarter in June, we'll announce the list of contractors eligible for the expedited option on our website.

Going forward, each week we'll randomly select projects for audit from the attestations that we receive during the quarter. You'll receive an email on Monday morning letting you know what projects have been identified for your company. Once you receive the email, you'll have until

the following Monday morning (or five working days) to submit the full validation for the identified project(s).

The reason why we do validations in the first place is to verify that the systems are installed to specifications and comply with all of the rules and regulations that are in place to provide for the safe and reliable operation of both the customer's system and our grid. By auditing the attestations, we're still verifying compliance but we're making it easier for the customer to connect sooner.

There is no requirement for eligible contractors to participate in EVO. A validation can be submitted at any time and will be processed as it is done today. We'll pilot this option for a year and making improvements, if necessary, along the way to smooth out any rough edges.

Answers to some questions you may have about the EVO

How will you treat inverter discrepancies given the changes taking place with qualified inverters?

At the time of validation submittal, inverters must meet compliance requirements for that specific project. For example, NEM customers are only required to meet TrOV-2 and full ride through. CGS, CSS, CGS+, Smart Export customers are required to have inverters on the qualified list and show screenshots to validate TrOV-2, full ride through, frequency-watt, volt-var, and deactivation of fixed power factor.

What is meant by a spot audit?

A portion of the total amount of attestations each week and after four cycles will be selected for audits in which we will require specific portions of the validation packet or the entire validation packet to be submitted to Hawaiian Electric. For example, if we receive 50 attestations one week you can expect that 30 get selected for audit, out of the 30 projects selected we may ask for inverter screen shots for 15 projects, Certification of Insurance for 5-projects, 5 for permits, and 5 full validation packets.

How much time will we be allowed to have to respond to a spot audit?

Contractors will have 5-business days to respond to an audit; if Hawaiian Electric does not receive the requested information by then the audit will be deemed as failed and the project will be identified as non-compliant. Customers and contractors will begin to receive notices to address the non-compliant project. Three notices for non-compliant projects will be sent every 30-days ultimately resulting in the private rooftop PV system locked-out if the validation packet is not accepted. Only the submittal of a correct and accepted validation packet will change the status of the project to compliant.

How will you conduct audits? Will they be onsite and require customer pre-notification?

Audits could include verification of inverter settings, single line drawings, certificate of insurance, as well as a witness test being conducted in the field. Basically everything that is required for a validation/verification is fair game for an audit. It is assumed that contractors have completed a full validation/verification after every project and are prepared to submit a full validation packet during audits.

Will you repeatedly audit the same systems?



Projects will be audited only once during the year that they were submitted. However, that same project has the potential to be audited by Hawaiian Electric in the future.

What happens if I fail a spot audit?

Contractors just have to remedy the situation depending on what caused the failed audit. It may be as simple as sending in a corrected photo or fixing a non-compliant setting or piece of equipment on an installation. Contractors that fail enough spot audits during the EVO cycle (3-months) risk having the option removed for the next cycle. They will have to recertify if they want to provide that option to customers in the future. Further, if a project fails a spot audit or no information is received after 5-business days the project will be deemed non-compliant and risk having the option removed in the next cycle; only a successful submission of a full validation packet will change the project's status to compliant.

When and how will we be notified of a spot audit?

The email notifying you of what systems have been selected for audit will be sent on Monday mornings. If you have submitted attestations, but haven't received an email by noon on Monday, reach out to us immediately to let us know that you haven't received the email. If you don't respond to an audit request by the deadline provided in the email (typically a specified time the following Monday), it will count as a fail. You may lose EVO status as a result and, in a worst case scenario, could result in the lockout of the customer's PV system until the paperwork is received.

How does the EVO make things better for me as a business person?

As a contractor you will be able to provide faster interconnection to your customer after installation if you were able to successfully pass certification and receive the EVO. A contractor who does not have EVO will have to successfully demonstrate sustained validation performance during a 3-month certification period in order to qualify for EVO.

How will you score validations? What are the criteria for receiving a pass?

Validations will be scored during certification on their ability to pass and be executed or fail on their initial submission. An occasional minor error doesn't prevent you from receiving the EVO. However, repeated mistakes, errors and omissions on submitted paperwork may keep you from earning and/or retaining EVO status.

Is this option available on all islands?

No. This option is only available on O'ahu.

Are there other changes to the validation process that I should be aware of?

No. There are no changes to the validation process at all.

What happens if I don't want to use the EVO?

No worries! Even if you qualify, taking advantage of the EVO is completely optional.

Where can I find the attestation form?

The form is emailed to eligible contractors prior to the start of the quarter. A copy of the form is also available by sending an email to connect@hawaiianelectric.com.

I have other questions that aren't answered on this list. Who do I ask?

Call us at 543-4760 or send us an email at connect@hawaiianelectric.com