

# The role of photovoltaic snow shield

Does snow affect solar photovoltaic system performance?

Solar photovoltaic (PV) systems are frequently installed in climates with significant snowfall. To better understand the effects of snowfall on the performance of PV systems, a multi-angle, multi-technology PV system was commissioned and monitored over two winters.

How does snow affect PV systems?

Obstruction of solar radiation The main influencing factor of snow on PV systems is the blockage of solar radiation on the photovoltaic cells. In order to quantify and assess the importance of this, some understanding of the optical properties of snow is required.

How does a snow-covered PV module affect energy influx?

2.1. Module control volume Assume the module as a control volume, the energy influx to a snow-covered module can occur in three ways: diffusion of short wave radiation through the snow pack, albedo reflection to the exposed rear of the module, and conduction from other parts of the PV array that are not covered with snow.

Do PV panels need a snow cover?

Datasheet performance of the panels is given under assumption of the 25°C STC temperature, so in practice a PV module might even perform better than advertised in the given light conditions in winter. However, there is clearly no net benefit of keeping a snow cover on the panels in order to cool them.

Should photovoltaic cells be able to generate electricity from snow?

The Nordic countries in particular will experience long periods of snow cover each year, and it seems clear that some measures need to be taken against snow to keep photovoltaic cells a viable means of electricity generation.

What causes snow on PV panels?

It has been shown that a variety of meteorological phenomena will lead to various types of water and ice deposits on the surface of PV panels in many parts of the world, snow being the most notable among them.

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