

Flexible export connections

What is a flexible export connection and how does it work?

A flexible export connection means your solar export limit isn't fixed but rather dynamically calculated based on the network conditions at the time. Compared with a fixed limit, this will mean you can export more solar generation, more often, while also ensuring network safety and stability.

Vector will communicate a dynamic export limit directly to compatible inverters over Wi-Fi.

How do I get a flexible export connection?

From 1 July, you can apply for flexible export connections using the updated Distributed Generation (DG) application form that will be available on our website.

If you are in the process of submitting a DG application, it would be good to keep in mind these changes.

If I have a flexible export connection, when will my export limit be reduced?

In most cases, very rarely.

International experience has shown us that customers can export at their maximum level most of the time. Export limits are only temporarily reduced to maintain network safety, stability and managing network equipment capacity (thermal) limits.

This typically only happens when the following coincide:

- On very sunny days when a lot of solar generation is being exported into the network in the same area at the same time.
- When electricity demand in your area is low.

Can I opt out of a flexible export connection?

Yes, you can choose to proceed with a static export connection instead. This static export limit will be set at a level which will ensure that the network can be operated safely in the long-term.

Why is my export currently limited to 5kW?

Currently, single-phase DG connections have a fixed export limit of up to 5kW. While you may install a larger system, the amount of power exported to the network is limited to help ensure the network operates safely and reliably for all customers in all scenarios, particularly as more DG is installed and multiple systems may be exporting at the same time.

From 1 July 2026, flexible export connections will allow higher export levels (up to approximately 10kW), only reducing export limits when absolutely necessary for safety and stability.

I already have installed Distributed Generation (DG) how can I increase my system size?

If you currently have a generation installation but want to increase the size of your system to make the most of the flexible 10KW export limit, from 1 July 2026 you will be able to apply for an increase in capacity through our existing DG application process. Please note this on the application form available from 1 July 2026. You will be able to increase system size and export limit within the same application form.

I already have installed Distributed Generation (DG) with a 5kW export limit, how can I increase it?

If you currently have a generation installation with export limited to 5kW but would like to maximise your export from your current system size, from 1 July you can apply for an increase in capacity through our existing DG application process. Please note this on the application form available from 1 July 2026.

How do I know if my inverter supports flexible exports? All inverters compliant with New Zealand standard, AS/NZS 4777.2 and capable of CSIP will support flexible exports. Your installer will be able to confirm whether your inverter is compatible and set it up correctly.

Your system will also need an internet connection so it can securely communicate with our network when needed.

What if I am looking to submit a DG application before 1 July?

You can still apply using the current application process, and your system will be set up with a standard (fixed) export limit.

From 1 July 2026, once flexible export connections are available, you can apply to move to a flexible export limit of up to 10kW using the updated application form.

Please note, that your system needs to be approved before it can be operated or export to the network.

What if I have already submitted a DG application and am waiting to hear back?

We'll continue to review your application under the current process. If approved, your system will be connected with a (fixed) export limit.

From 1 July, once flexible export connections are available, you'll be able to apply to move to a flexible export limit of up to 10kW using the updated application form.

If you're considering your options, you can either continue with your current application or choose to apply under the new process from 1 July, whichever best suits your timing.

Please note, that your system needs to be approved before it can be operated or export to the network.

I'm an installer, what do I need to do?

We'll be in touch in the coming months to support any process changes and share more details. For now, please continue installing inverters compliant with our current Vector standard (AS/NZS 4777.2). If you have any questions in the meantime, feel free to reach out to us.

Do flexible export connections save customers money?

Yes. Solar customers with flexible export connections can export more energy more often than with static limits, potentially increasing the solar buy-back rebates you receive from your electricity retailer. Additionally, all customers benefit as less investment is needed to reinforce the network for solar integration.

Is automatic approval available?

Flexible export connections significantly expedite the processing time, as approval is granted automatically if the customer meets the requirements for a flexible export connection, i.e. using a compliant inverter and connecting to our platform.

Currently, establishing a fixed connection necessitates multiple business checks to ensure the network can support it.

Are flexible export connections beneficial for customers and New Zealand?

Flexible export connections offer advantages all around.

1. Enabling more solar export, from more customers, more of the time: The key benefit of flexible export connections, compared with static limits, is that they enable as much solar export that the network can accommodate. In contrast, static limits must necessarily be set conservatively, to keep the network safe and stable in extreme-case conditions. Because these conditions occur rarely, static limits leave plenty of spare capacity for solar export unused, the rest of the time.
2. Lower cost for network integration: Flexible export connections reduce investment in network reinforcement, which keep overall network costs down for everyone i.e. solar and non-solar customers.
3. Long-term equity and fair network access: Solar inverters typically last 15 years. If early adopters lock in a 5kW fixed export limit (in some networks in NZ, it is 10kW) indefinitely, they effectively reserve network capacity for 15 years. This allocation can prevent new customers from accessing solar export capacity, much like giving first drivers on a new highway lifetime traffic-free access, while others are barred from entry.
4. Promoting socioeconomic fairness: Most current solar adopters tend to be more affluent. Allowing them to monopolize export capacity for 15 years (i.e. Inverter lifetime) essentially locks out less affluent households later, reinforcing inequity.

How is network investment balanced with solar export capacity requirements as solar adoption increases?

Flexible export connections allow for an optimized approach to balancing network investment with solar export capacity. We remain committed to investing in the network to fulfil our customers' needs. Should solar uptake accelerate in Auckland, we will incrementally expand network capacity to ensure flexible export connections are able to export as much solar generation as possible, most of the time. Importantly, this investment is significantly lower than that required for fixed connections.