BlackoutProof Installer Call Script

(Questions to ask before hiring a solar backup or off-grid installer)

Goal:
You're not just looking for *a* solar installer. You're looking for someone who truly understands *hybrid backup* or *off-grid* systems, as opposed to just conventional grid-tied setups that shut off when the power goes out.Use this script to whittle your list down to the top candidates.

---

1 - Start the Call

> "Hi, my name is [Your Name]. I'm planning a solar + battery backup system for my home and wanted to ask a few quick questions to see if this type of project is something you guys do"

(Friendly and low-pressure—this keeps them talking.)

---

2 - Experience & Capability

> "Do you have experience installing *hybrid backup* or *off-grid* systems—not just standard grid-tie solar?"

If they say yes:

> "Nice. Were those systems designed to run independently during blackouts, or were they grid-tied with limited backup?"

Listen for:

- Confidence discussing hybrid/off-grid systems.
- Familiarity with brands like Midnite Solar, Sol-Ark, Victron, Outback, EG4, etc.
- References to battery banks, subpanels, or generator integration.

---

3 - Technical Competence

> “Which inverter brands have you installed for battery-based systems?”
> “Do you usually back up the whole home or just an essential-loads subpanel, or have you done both?”
> “Have you tied a generator into any of your solar + battery systems?”

Look for: clear understanding of transfer switches, critical loads subpanels, and familiarity with equipment brands like Midnite Solar, Sol-Ark, Victron, Outback, EG4, etc.

If you hear only brands like SolarEdge, Enphase, Huawei, or Sungrow, it’s likely that this installer only has grid-tied experience.

---

4 - Permitting & Utility Coordination

> “Do you handle the permitting process and interconnection paperwork with the utility?”
> “Have you worked on systems that operate in *zero-export* mode where no power is sold back to the utility and it’s treated like a backup generator?”

Good sign: It’s okay if they haven’t, as the utility may not treat zero export any different. But if they have experience with this, that could be a good sign and they should be able to explain how to meet utility requirements (interconnect agreements, etc.).

---

5 - Battery Bank & Code Compliance

> “Are you familiar with any local regulations or code limits on battery size in different structures? For example, limits around how many kilowatt-hours can be installed inside a home vs. in a garage or detached building?”

Listen for:
Installers who mention **NFPA 855**, or the **IRC**—that could mean they are familiar with the rules in your area. Bear in mind that the 40 kWh in utility spaces, 80 kWh + outside, etc. I mentioned in the video could be different in your location.

---

6 - Project Scope & Flexibility

> “Do you prefer to handle the entire installation from start to finish, or for customers to handle parts of it—like trenching or setting posts in concrete for a solar mounts?”

Tip:
If they’re open to a “shared install,” you can save labor costs and still have them handle the electrical work and permitting. Or if you want a contractor to do everything, you’ll look for a willingness to do that.

7 - Design & Sizing

> “Do you do a design or load analysis before quoting?”
> “Do you measure real energy usage—like with an energy monitor—or estimate from the power bill?”

Good sign: They use tools such as *Emporia Vue* or *Sense* for data-driven design. But for a whole home backup system, power bill works too.

---

8 - Battery Knowledge

> “What types of batteries do you usually install?”
> “How do you decide the size—based on hours of runtime or specific load coverage?”

Look for answers involving **$LiFePO_4$** (lithium iron phosphate) batteries, days of reserve power appropriate for your location (see prior videos on this) and realistic depth-of-discharge settings (run them down to 20% state of charge, thereby using 80% of the battery capacity).

---

9 - Support & Warranty

> “Who handles service or warranty issues after installation?”
> “Are you willing to install equipment I supply if it meets UL and code requirements?”

A solid installer stands behind their workmanship, even if you buy some gear yourself.

---

10 - Wrap-Up

> “That’s super helpful. Could I get your email so I can send over a few system details for a quote or to continue the conversation?”

Bonus Tip

If you can’t find a solar installer with hybrid experience, look for **local electricians** who install standby generators. They already understand transfer switches, bonding, and inspection requirements—and can often handle hybrid systems with the right documentation.