

AI-03774 Solar Panel Cleaning

Owner	Ⓜ Rigel Arcayan
Tags	Problem
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For solar panels, last time I cleaned it was 5 years ago, do I need to clean it?

Yes — after 5 years, you almost certainly need to clean your solar panels. Most guidance recommends cleaning once or twice a year, and going five years without cleaning is far beyond typical maintenance intervals, especially if you live in a dusty or pollen-heavy area. [lehmannelect...](#)

Why cleaning is needed after 5 years

Even though solar panels are low-maintenance, they are not zero-maintenance. Dirt, dust, pollen, bird droppings, and mineral deposits gradually build up and can reduce energy output. Studies show that dirty panels can lose 7–25% efficiency, and in dusty regions even more. [wikehow.com](#) +1

If you haven't cleaned your panels in five years, it's likely that:

- A thick film of dust or grime has accumulated, especially in dry or windy climates.
 - Bird droppings or pollen may have hardened and won't wash off with rain.
 - Efficiency may have dropped, even if you haven't noticed it yet.
 - Mineral deposits may have formed if you live in a hard-water or low-rainfall area.

Most sources agree that rain alone is not enough to keep panels clean long-term. [powermy.com](#)

What experts recommend

Across multiple guides:

- General recommendation: Clean 1–2 times per year. lehmannel... +1
 - Dusty or polluted areas: Clean every 3–6 months. theenvironme...
 - If you see visible buildup or reduced output: Clean immediately. solar.com

Since you've gone five years, you're well past any recommended interval.

What you should do now

1. Inspect the panels visually.
If you see a film of dirt, bird droppings, or discoloration, cleaning is overdue.
2. Check your energy production.
If output has dropped compared to previous years or expected values, dirt may be the cause.
3. Clean them safely (or hire a pro):
 - Use soft brush + mild soap or just water.
 - Avoid pressure washers and harsh chemicals.
 - Clean on a cool, overcast morning to avoid streaking. theenvironme...

If your panels are on a steep or high roof, a professional cleaning (typically \$150–\$300) may be safer.

Bottom line

Yes — after 5 years, you should clean your solar panels.

Even in ideal conditions, going that long without cleaning can significantly reduce efficiency and may allow grime to harden, making cleaning more difficult later.

If you want, I can help you figure out how dirty your panels likely are based on your local environment in Round Rock, TX or help you decide whether DIY or professional cleaning makes more sense.