# Solar lights not working?

Find your symptom, then tick each check as you go. For a new light, allow the first full charge specified in its manual before judging performance.

| What do you see? | Start with checks |
|---|---|
| A new light has never turned on | **1, 2, 3** |
| It glows weakly or goes out early | **3, 4, 8** |
| It flickers, or you see droplets inside | **5, 6** |
| It stays dark at night or lights up in daylight | **1, 7** |
| Several lights faded after the weather changed | **3, 8** |

## ☐ 1. Check the switch and mode

Select ON, AUTO or the operating mode named in the manual. If the light uses a motion sensor, test it after dark by walking through its detection area.

## ☐ 2. Remove shipping tabs

Peel off any temporary film covering the panel. Pull the insulating tab from the battery compartment if one is fitted. Give the panel a full sunny day to charge.

## ☐ 3. Watch where the sun falls

Wipe dust and pollen from the panel with a soft, damp cloth. Check for shade again in the afternoon. Move the panel into direct sun and retest after charging.

## ☐ 4. Read the battery label before replacing it

For a user-replaceable battery, switch the light off. Match the specified rechargeable chemistry, size and voltage, and align the + and - ends. Keep alkaline cells out of the charger and avoid mixing old and new cells.

## ☐ 5. Inspect the battery contacts

With the light off, check the accessible compartment for a loose cell, crust or rusted springs. Follow the manual for cleaning. If the battery has leaked or a contact has rusted through, stop and contact the manufacturer.

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# Retest the light after dark

## ☐ 6. Look for water inside

If you see fog or droplets behind the lens, switch the light off. Follow the manual for drying accessible parts and checking seals. If moisture returns, contact the manufacturer or replace the fixture.

## ☐ 7. Try the cover test

At night, cover the light sensor while the light is in its operating mode. If it lights up only when covered, move it away from porch or street lighting. If it stays on by day, wipe the sensor window and clear anything blocking it.

## ☐ 8. Compare sunny days with cloudy ones

Brush snow from the panel. Short winter days and cloud can reduce runtime. Compare the same light after a clear day before buying a replacement battery.

## ☐ 9. Decide whether to replace it

A cracked panel, recurring water damage or broken contacts can justify replacement. If an approved new battery and two sunny days fail to restore operation, check warranty options before buying a new fixture.

### Where to take the old battery

For an intact removable rechargeable battery, tape the terminals with nonconductive tape or bag it separately. Use a battery drop-off or household hazardous waste program. Keep rechargeable batteries out of household trash and curbside recycling.

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### References

Solar Lights Not Working? 9 Checks to Fix Them

Ethan Caldwell, Promotional Product Inc. | November 28, 2026

U.S. EPA / Used Household Batteries

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