Freeloader FAQ

Please Note: We recommend your first charge for your freeloader should be via USB

1. The first charge given to Freeloader using the USB connection cable takes longer than noted in the manual?

- We recommend that the first charge given to Freeloader (from new) is done from the USB charge cable connected to a PC or lap top. The reason for this is that the first charge will take the longest (between 4 – 6hours). Like most new devices using a lithium ion battery, the first charge will always take longer than subsequent charges. Please keep the Freeloader connected to the USB until the central LED (B) turns from red to green.

2. The instructions say I should have green lights on the two outer LED's (A & C) but I have red?

- Our original hub had green LED's (A & C); however this was changed to red LED's because the red LED consumes less energy than green. Most user manuals have now been amended.

3. My Freeloader has been outside, in the sun but when I connected it to my device, it only charged for a short time and did not deliver much power?

- Please ensure the first charge is given by the USB cable.
- Please make sure you have removed the protective film from the solar cells as this will radically reduce the effectiveness of the cells.
- Please ensure Freeloader is given exposure to sunny conditions for between 5 to 10 hours.
- Ensure the Freeloader is outside, facing south, in an un-shaded position and ideally tilted at a 45 degree angle.

- If Freeloader is connected to a device that has a near full battery (if for example you were testing Freeloader from new), Freeloader would, potentially, not deliver power because if the battery in the device has more or equal power than the Freeloader, Freeloader will not be able to deliver power. Wait until the device to be charged is 50% to 60% full.

4. The instructions say the outer Red LED's should go green when the Freeloader hub is fully charged from the solar cells but this has never happened?

- The outer LED's will never go green! There is a mistake in the manual that has now been rectified. The reason the lights will not turn green is that a voltage regulator has been built into the solar charging circuit. This means that when the hub gets to 98.5% full charge, power is cut from the solar cells, so protecting the hub from overcharging and subsequent damage.

5. How do I know when the Freeloader hub is fully charged and can I use the power from Freeloader even if it's not fully charged?

- There is no indication Freeloader gives when its battery hub is fully charged from the solar cells (see point 4 above). However, this is not strictly necessary because Freeloader will deliver power whatever state of charge is in its battery hub.

6. What performance I can expect from Freeloader?

- After 1 day in full sun (9am to 6pm) the Freeloader hub will be pretty much fully charged. When connected to your device it will deliver power for 20minutes to 1hour depending on the device.

- If Freeloader is positioned behind a window, again facing south for a 1day charge in full sun conditions the time needed to fully charge Freeloader's battery will be up to 3 days. The reason for this increase in time is that most glass incorporates UV filters, which naturally reduce the amount of irradiation needed to enable solar panels to operate effectively

- In cloudy conditions, Freeloader may take approximately 1 ½ times longer to charge than the above mentioned times, but this is depending on the time of year, density of cloud etc.

7. Can I charge my Freeloader hub whilst at the same time powering a device?

- No. If Freeloader's hub is empty you will not be able to simultaneously charge and deliver power. The reason is that Freeloader delivers power to a device approximately 10 times quicker than its solar cells can charge up its hub.

8. Will charging Freeloader from its solar cells behind glass cause me any problems?

- Not really a problem but it will increase the time needed to charge the hub sometimes up to three times longer than if outside. – see point 3 above.

9. I have Freeloader positioned on a shady windowsill. Will the Freeloader still charge?

- Yes the Freeloader will still be charged by its solar cells but it will take a lot longer compared to being outside in full sun – up to 4-5 days longer in fact.

10. How long will Freeloader's hub store its power for?

- The Freeloader can store the power without any significant loss for around 3 months.

11. Can I leave the Freeloader out in the rain?

- No we do not recommend getting the Freeloader wet, however, should this happen accidentally, please dry both hub and cells in a dry airy position away from children and food stuffs. The solar cells should be fine; however, the hub / battery may be unsalvageable. A trial will soon tell, however, we would recommend this trial be done outside by the solar cells only and NOT the USB charge cable. If the hub will not work a new one can be ordered from www.solartechnology.co.uk

12. How do I connect Freeloader to my iPod as I don't seem to have a connector in the Freeloader pack that fits the iPod?

- To connect up an iPod please use the original sync cable (the cable you use for connecting the iPod to a PC) and connected it to the female USB connector tip supplied with the Freeloader. Or you can purchases a connector just for the iPod from www.firebox.com

13. I have a device that can be charged via my computers USB port can the Freeloader charge it?

- Yes the Freeloader should be able to charge it

14. Are there any devices that Freeloader cannot power?

- Freeloader has a voltage range of 3v to 5.5v, so any device that needs a higher voltage such as a lap top, video camera is outside the range of Freeloader.

- Some digital camera's where the battery of the camera needs to be removed and inserted into a cradle to charge.