

911 and Your Internet Phone

THE 60-SECOND VERSION

- 1 911 works on internet phones — but only if your address is registered correctly.
- 2 Update the registered address any time you move the phone box to a new place.
- 3 Many providers let you dial 933 to hear your registered address read back as a test.
- 4 In a power or internet outage, the internet phone can't call 911 without a battery.
- 5 A charged cell phone can always reach 911 — keep one as your backstop.

Stuck? Call or text Bill — real help, no rushing.

Call or text: (330) 200-8042

Book a visit: billshometech.com/book · \$99 flat first visit



911 and VoIP — What Changes and How to Register Your Address

What changes with 911 on VoIP — and how to register your address.

————— **An Extended Guide · No. 1722** —————

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

Bill Davis — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · bill@billshometech.com · Atwater, Ohio

Book a visit — billshometech.com/book

What's Inside

Everything in this guide, with page numbers. Skip to whichever chapter answers your question right now.

The 60-Second Version	5
1. Why This Guide Matters	5
2. How the Old Copper Line Handled 911	6
3. Why an Internet Phone Is Different	6
4. What “Registered Location” Means	7
5. How to Register or Check Your Address	7
6. The 933 Test	8
7. Moving the Box Means Updating the Address	8
8. The Power and Internet Outage Risk	9
9. Keep a Charged Cell Phone — Always	10
10. How Cell Phone 911 Finds You	10
11. 911 Is Getting More Reliable	11
12. If You Travel With Your Phone Box	11
13. 911 for Someone Who Lives Alone	12
14. Telling Your Family the Plan	12
15. Common 911 Mistakes I See	13
16. What a Good 911 Setup Looks Like	13
17. A Few Plain Words to Know	14
18. Questions I Get All the Time	14
19. When to Just Call Me	15
20. Text-to-911 — A Backup Worth Knowing	15

21. What to Tell the Dispatcher	16
22. Which Phone and Number 911 Uses	16
23. Caller ID Is Not Your 911 Location	17
24. Right After You Switch Services	17
25. When the Internet Alone Goes Down	18
26. Medical Alerts and 911 Together	18
27. Accidental and Hang-Up 911 Calls	19
28. Teaching the Whole Household	19
29. Power Backup Done Simply	20
30. Why I Don't Lose Sleep Over This	20
31. A Yearly 911 Check-Up	21
32. What I'd Tell My Own Neighbor	21
Everyday Cheat Sheet	22
A Picture to Follow Along	23
A Second Look	24
A Note From Bill	24
Your Visit — and My Promise	25

SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

In a hurry? Here's the whole thing on one page. On the old copper landline, 911 knew your address automatically because your phone was wired to one fixed spot. An internet phone — cable phone or VoIP — doesn't have that fixed wiring, so your provider keeps a “registered location,” the street address they hand to 911 when you call. Make sure that address is correct, update it any time you move the box, and test it. And because an internet phone goes dead in a power or internet outage, always keep a charged cell phone as your final way to reach 911.

- 911 works on internet phones — but only if your address is registered correctly.
- Update the registered address any time you move the phone box to a new place.
- Many providers let you dial 933 to hear your registered address read back as a test.
- In a power or internet outage, the internet phone can't call 911 without a battery.
- A charged cell phone can always reach 911 — keep one as your backstop.

WATCH OUT

The single most dangerous mistake is assuming 911 already knows where you are. On an internet phone, it only knows the address your provider has on file. Confirm it. This one step can be the difference in an emergency.

1. Why This Guide Matters

A few minutes now can matter enormously later.

Of all the little changes that come with moving off the old copper phone line, this is the one I treat most seriously, and I want you to as well. It's about 911 — the call you hope you never have to make, and the one that absolutely has to work when you do. The good news is that 911 works just fine on the newer phone services. The catch is that it depends on a setup step the old copper line handled for you automatically.

This guide is not here to scare you. It's here to make sure one simple thing is done right, so that if you ever dial 911 from your internet or cable phone, help is sent to your actual door. We'll cover why it works differently, how to register and test your address, and how to keep a backup so help can reach you even in an outage.

Everything here is factual, plain, and practical. If anything about your own setup is unclear after reading, that's exactly the kind of thing I'm glad to check in person.

TIP

If you only do one thing from this guide, call your phone provider and ask: “What address do you have registered for my 911?” Make sure the answer is right.

2. How the Old Copper Line Handled 911

The address was baked into the wire.

To understand what changed, it helps to know how the old line worked. A traditional copper landline ran from a fixed spot in your home back to the phone company. That physical wire was tied to your street address in the phone company's records. So when you dialed 911, the system already knew where that wire lived, and your address popped up on the dispatcher's screen without anyone doing anything.

That was a genuinely lovely feature, and it's part of why people trusted the landline so completely. The address couldn't be wrong, because the phone couldn't move — it was nailed to the wall and wired to one place.

GOOD TO KNOW

This automatic address is one of the few things the old copper line did better than its replacements. The newer services match it — they just need you to confirm the address once, because the phone is no longer tied to a fixed wire.

3. Why an Internet Phone Is Different

The call travels as data, not over a fixed wire.

An internet phone — whether it's cable phone, an Ooma or Vonage box, or any VoIP service — carries your call over the internet as data, not over a fixed copper pair tied to your address. The box can, in principle, be unplugged and carried to another house, or even another state, and still work. That flexibility is handy, but it means the phone itself can't tell 911 where it is.

So instead, your provider keeps a “registered location” on file — the street address you give them when you set up the service. When you dial 911, the provider attaches that address and routes your call to the 911 center for that area. The whole system leans on that address being right.

WATCH OUT

Because the phone box can travel, the registered address can quietly become wrong — if you move the box to another room in a different building, take it on vacation, or move house. Any time the box moves to a new address, update the registration.

4. What “Registered Location” Means

The address your provider hands to 911.

Let me put it as plainly as I can. Your “registered location” — some providers call it your E911 address or emergency address — is simply the street address stored with your phone account that gets sent to 911 when you call. It's not automatic and it's not magic. It's a piece of information you give your provider, and it stays whatever you last told them until you change it.

When you first set up an internet or cable phone, you'll be asked for this address, or it'll be filled in from your account. Either way, your job is to make sure it's correct and complete — the right house number, street, and apartment or unit if you have one. A missing apartment number can send help to the wrong door in a big building.

TIP

If you live in an apartment, a mother-in-law suite, or above a business, make sure the unit number is part of your registered address. “123 Main” and “123 Main, Apt B” can send help to very different doors.

5. How to Register or Check Your Address

The steps, in plain order.

Checking and fixing your registered address is usually simple, and it's worth doing even if you think it's already right. Here's how to go about it.

- 1 Find out who provides your home phone — look at your bill or the box your phone plugs into.
- 2 Call them, or log into your account online, and look for 911, E911, or “emergency address” settings.
- 3 Confirm the address shown is exactly where the phone box lives right now — house number, street, and any unit number.
- 4 Fix anything that's wrong, and save it. Ask them to confirm it's updated.

5 Once it's set, test it (we'll cover the 933 test next).

If you can't find the setting or aren't sure what you're looking at, don't guess — call the provider and ask them directly to read back and confirm your registered 911 address. It's a normal request and they handle it all the time.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't need to be a computer whiz to do this. A phone call to your provider is a perfectly good way to check and fix your registered address — no website required.

6. The 933 Test

Hear your address read back — without calling 911.

Here's a genuinely useful trick that many internet and cable phone providers offer. From your home phone, you dial 933 — not 911 — and an automated recording reads back the information on file for your line: often your phone number and the registered address that 911 would receive. It does not ring a real 911 center and it does not send anyone to your home. It's purely a check.

This is the best way to confirm your address is right without tying up emergency lines. If the recording reads back the correct address, you're in good shape. If it reads back a wrong or missing address, call your provider right away and get it fixed, then test again.

WATCH OUT

Not every provider uses 933, and some use a different test method. So confirm your own provider's way to test — don't assume 933 works until you've checked. And never dial a real 911 just to test; that ties up a line someone else may urgently need.

7. Moving the Box Means Updating the Address

The most common way it goes wrong.

This is where good people slip up, so let me be direct. An internet or cable phone box can be unplugged and moved. The moment it's plugged in somewhere new, the registered address on file is out of date — it still points to the old spot. If you dialed 911 from the new location without updating, help could be sent to where the box used to be.

So the rule is simple: any time the box moves to a new address, update the registered location before you rely on the phone. Moving it to a different room in the same house is

fine; what matters is a different building or a different street number. If you're not sure whether a move counts, update it anyway — there's no harm in confirming.

WATCH OUT

Never move an internet phone box to a new home and leave the old address registered. In an emergency, help would be sent to the wrong place. Update it every single time the box changes buildings.

8. The Power and Internet Outage Risk

The honest weak spot, and how to cover it.

Here's the trade-off the old copper line didn't have. An internet or cable phone runs on electricity and on your internet connection. When the power goes out, or the internet goes down, the phone goes dead — and that includes its ability to call 911. The copper line powered itself and kept working in a storm; the newer phones don't, unless you've added a battery.

This is not a reason to avoid the newer phones. It's a reason to plan. A battery backup on your phone box and internet gear keeps the phone alive through a power cut for a while. But a battery can't fix an internet outage coming from the provider's end. That's exactly why the final backstop is always a charged cell phone, which we'll cover next.

- Add a battery backup so the phone survives a short power outage.
- Remember a battery can't help if the internet itself is down.
- Keep a charged cell phone as the one backup that doesn't depend on your home power or internet.

TIP

If anyone in the home depends on the phone for medical emergencies, a battery backup isn't optional in my book — it's essential. I'm glad to set one up and make sure it's doing its job.

9. Keep a Charged Cell Phone — Always

The one backup that works when everything else fails.

I'll say this plainly because it's the most important safety habit of all: keep a charged cell phone in the house, and know where it is. When the power's out, the internet's down, and the home phone is silent, a cell phone can still reach 911. It runs on its own battery and its own signal, completely separate from your home's power and internet.

It doesn't have to be fancy or expensive. Even a simple cell phone, kept charged, is a lifeline. In fact, a cell phone is required by law to be able to dial 911 even with no active service plan, as long as it has a charge and can reach a signal. So an old cell phone, kept plugged in and charged, makes a fine emergency backup by the bed.

GOOD TO KNOW

An old cell phone with no service plan can still call 911 as long as it's charged and has a signal. Keep one charged in the bedroom as a dedicated emergency backup — it costs nothing and could matter enormously.

10. How Cell Phone 911 Finds You

Different from a registered address, but it works.

People sometimes wonder how 911 knows where they are when they call from a cell phone, since there's no fixed address. The answer is that a cell 911 call is routed through the nearest cell tower to the 911 center that covers that area, and it shares an approximate location with the dispatcher — these days often a fairly close one, drawn from the phone itself.

That approximate location is good and getting better, but it's not the same as a precise registered street address. So the smartest habit on any 911 call — cell or home phone — is to state your address out loud as soon as the dispatcher answers, if you're able. Don't assume they already have it. Saying it plainly removes all doubt.

TIP

On any 911 call, say your address first, before anything else, if you can. "I need help at 123 Elm Street in Ravenna." That one sentence guarantees they know where to send help even if the technology hiccups.

11. 911 Is Getting More Reliable

The system behind it keeps improving.

Here's some reassurance. The nation's 911 system is in the middle of a long upgrade, generally called Next Generation 911, that makes emergency calls more accurate and more reliable over time. Through 2026, providers and 911 centers have continued improving how calls are routed and how caller locations are pinned down. You don't need to follow any of the technical detail — the point is simply that the trend is toward better, not worse.

None of that changes your part, though. The upgrades happen behind the scenes at the phone companies and the 911 centers. Your job stays the same: register the right address, test it, keep a battery backup, and keep a charged cell phone. Do those, and you're taking full advantage of everything the system offers.

GOOD TO KNOW

The 911 system keeps getting better at finding callers, but it still works best when you've registered the right address and can say where you are. Technology and good habits together are what keep you safe.

12. If You Travel With Your Phone Box

Snowbirds and second homes, done safely.

One of the conveniences of a portable VoIP box or a cellular home base is that you can take it with you — down to Florida for the winter, say — and your home number rings wherever you plug it in. That's genuinely handy. But it carries a safety string attached, and it's the same one we keep returning to: the registered address.

If you move the box to a winter place, your 911 registered address must be updated to that place, because that's where help would be sent. When you come home in the spring, change it back. Every relocation, update the address. It takes two minutes and it's the difference between help arriving at your door or hundreds of miles away.

WATCH OUT

A traveling phone box with a stale registered address is genuinely dangerous. In an emergency, help would go to wherever the box was last registered. Update it the moment you set the box up in a new place.

13. 911 for Someone Who Lives Alone

Building in a little extra safety.

If you live by yourself, reaching 911 isn't just a convenience — it's a lifeline, and it deserves a little extra planning. The goal is simple: make sure you can always reach help, even in a storm, an outage, or a fall. A few small choices make that far more certain.

- Register your home-phone 911 address and test it, so it's always correct.
- Add a battery backup so the home phone survives a power cut.
- Keep a charged cell phone within reach — by the bed and in your main living area.
- Write your full address on a card by each phone, so you can read it off in a panic.
- Consider a medical alert device, and make sure it's one that doesn't rely on the old phone line.

None of this is meant to worry you. It's the opposite — a few small steps now mean you never have to wonder whether you can reach help when you need it. This is the kind of setup I'm always glad to put together for someone living on their own.

14. Telling Your Family the Plan

So the people who help you know how 911 works now.

A lot of my 911 conversations are with adult children worried about a parent's safety from out of town. If that's your situation — on either side — it helps enormously to write down how emergencies are handled, so everyone's on the same page.

- Which company provides the home phone, and that its 911 address is registered.
- Whether there's a battery backup, and roughly how long it lasts.
- Where the charged cell phone backup is kept.
- Whether there's a medical alert, and that it was tested and reaches help.
- The full home address, written plainly, kept by the phone.

When a storm knocks the power out, the family member two states away will sleep far better knowing exactly how their loved one can still reach help. It's a short conversation that buys a lot of peace of mind.

15. Common 911 Mistakes I See

The slip-ups worth avoiding.

After helping a lot of people set up newer phones, the same handful of 911 mistakes come up again and again. None of them are your fault — the companies don't make this clear — but knowing them ahead of time keeps you safe.

- Assuming 911 already knows your address on an internet phone — it only knows what's registered.
- Moving the phone box and forgetting to update the registered address.
- Skipping the battery backup and having no phone in a storm.
- Having no charged cell phone as a backstop.
- Never testing — not knowing whether the registered address is even right.

WATCH OUT

Testing with a real 911 call is itself a mistake — it ties up a line someone may desperately need. Use the 933 test, or ask your provider to confirm your address. Save real 911 for real emergencies.

16. What a Good 911 Setup Looks Like

A short checklist you can actually finish.

Let me pull it all together into a picture of what “done right” looks like, so you can measure your own setup against it. If you can honestly tick off each of these, you're in good shape.

- 1 Your registered 911 address is correct and complete, unit number and all.
- 2 You've tested it — dialed 933 or had your provider confirm it.
- 3 You have a battery backup on the phone box and internet gear.
- 4 You keep a charged cell phone as the final backstop.
- 5 You update the registered address any time the box moves to a new building.
- 6 Your family knows the plan and your address is written by the phone.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you can tick all six of these, you've done more for your home's safety than most people ever get around to. If a couple are missing, they're easy to fix — and I'm glad to help you finish the list.

17. A Few Plain Words to Know

The jargon, translated.

The 911 and phone-company terms can sound technical. Here's the short translation so nothing throws you.

- VoIP / digital voice — your call carried over the internet.
- Registered location / E911 address — the street address your provider sends to 911.
- 933 — the number you dial to hear your registered address read back, as a test.
- Battery backup / UPS — a battery that keeps your phone alive in a power outage.
- Next Generation 911 — the ongoing upgrade making emergency calls more accurate.
- Approximate location — the rough position a cell 911 call shares with dispatch.

TIP

Keep this little list with your guide. When your provider uses one of these words, you'll know exactly what they're talking about.

18. Questions I Get All the Time

Quick, plain answers.

Does 911 really work on an internet phone? Yes — as long as your address is registered and the phone has power and internet at the moment you call.

Do I have to register my address myself? You have to make sure it's right. It may be filled in at setup, but check it — don't assume.

What if the power's out? The internet phone won't reach 911 without a battery backup. That's why you keep a charged cell phone.

Is 933 safe to dial? Yes, where it's offered — it's a test that reads back your address and does not call a real 911 center.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your question isn't here, it's probably one I've answered before — just call and ask. There's no charge to ask a safety question over the phone, and I'd rather you ask than wonder.

19. When to Just Call Me

This is exactly the kind of thing I check on a visit.

I wrote this guide so you'd understand how 911 works on a newer phone and feel confident it's set up right. But if you'd rather have someone confirm it for you, that's entirely reasonable — this is safety, after all. Checking your registered address, running the 933 test, setting up a battery backup, and making sure your cell phone and medical alert are ready is exactly the kind of visit I do every week.

I come to you, here in Portage County and the nearby towns. The first in-home visit is a flat ninety-nine dollars, and if a problem can be handled without a trip, I offer remote help too. If you're not completely happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's the whole deal — no fine print.

TIP

When you call, my assistant Sophie may answer and take down the details so I can call you back — she's there so you always reach a friendly voice, not a dead end.

20. Text-to-911 — A Backup Worth Knowing

When you can't speak, or a call won't go through.

Most areas now let you send a text message to 911 from a cell phone — you put 911 in the “to” line and type what's wrong. It's meant for situations where you can't safely speak, where speaking is hard, or where a voice call won't connect but a text might squeak through a weak signal. The guidance from 911 itself is simple: call if you can, text if you can't.

If you ever do text 911, lead with your location and the nature of the emergency, keep the messages short and plain, and don't use slang or abbreviations. Text-to-911 is a cell phone feature, not a home phone one, which is one more reason the charged cell phone earns its place as your backup.

GOOD TO KNOW

Text-to-911 isn't available everywhere and works best as a backup to a voice call, not a replacement. If you can speak safely, always call — a voice call gives dispatchers the most to work with.

21. What to Tell the Dispatcher

The few things that matter most in the moment.

It's worth rehearsing, calmly, what you'd say if you ever had to call 911 — because in a real emergency, nerves take over, and a little practice in advance pays off. The dispatcher is trained to guide you, so you don't have to remember everything. But a few things help them help you fast.

- 1 Say your address first — the full street address, and town.
- 2 Say what's wrong in a sentence: a fall, chest pain, a fire, an intruder.
- 3 Give your name and the phone number you're calling from.
- 4 Stay on the line — don't hang up until the dispatcher tells you to.
- 5 Do what they ask; they may walk you through steps while help is on the way.

TIP

Write your full address, including town and any apartment number, on a card taped by each phone. In a panic, even your own address can slip your mind — reading it off a card removes all doubt.

22. Which Phone and Number 911 Uses

If you have more than one line or handset.

Some homes have more than one phone number, or a main line plus extra handsets. With an internet or cable phone, there's usually one primary number, and that's the one tied to your registered 911 address. If you have a second number, check whether it has its own registered address or shares the first one — don't assume.

The practical upshot is simple: no matter which handset you grab in the house, dialing 911 sends help to the one registered address on file for that line. So the thing that matters is keeping that address correct, not which particular phone you pick up.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you've got a couple of phone numbers in the house — maybe an old business line — ask your provider to confirm each one's registered 911 address separately. It's easy for a second line's address to be overlooked.

23. Caller ID Is Not Your 911 Location

A common and important mix-up.

Here's a confusion worth clearing up. The name and number that show up on someone's caller ID when you phone them is a separate thing from the address 911 receives. People sometimes figure that because their caller ID shows the right name, 911 must have the right address too. Those are two different pieces of information, stored and handled separately.

So checking your caller ID tells you nothing about whether your 911 address is correct. The only way to know your 911 address is to check it directly — with the 933 test or by asking your provider. Don't let a correct caller ID lull you into skipping the 911 check.

WATCH OUT

A correct caller ID does not mean your 911 address is correct. They're separate. Always confirm the 911 address on its own, no matter what your caller ID says.

24. Right After You Switch Services

The 911 steps to do on day one.

The riskiest moment for 911 is the day you switch to a new phone service, because that's when the registered address is fresh and unverified. So make these the very first things you do once the new phone is working — before you move on to anything else.

- 1 Confirm the new service has your correct, complete street address on file.
- 2 Run the 933 test, or call the provider and have them read your address back.
- 3 Make sure a battery backup is in place, or planned.
- 4 Check that your charged cell phone is nearby and working.
- 5 If you have a medical alert, call that company and confirm it still reaches help.

WATCH OUT

Don't let the new phone go a single day with an unverified 911 address. It takes five minutes to check, and it's the first thing I confirm whenever I set a new phone up for someone.

25. When the Internet Alone Goes Down

Not just power — the connection matters too.

People think of the power outage, but forget that the internet can go down on its own, with the lights still on. If your internet service drops — a cut line down the road, trouble at the provider's end — your internet or cable phone goes silent even though you have power. A battery backup doesn't help here, because the problem isn't power; it's the connection.

This is one more reason the charged cell phone is your true safety net: it reaches 911 over the cell network, completely independent of your home internet. If your internet is the kind that drops often, weigh that carefully before you put your only phone on it — and keep that cell phone close.

WATCH OUT

If your home internet goes out regularly, don't treat your internet phone as your only lifeline. A cellular home base or a reliable cell phone gives you a path to 911 that doesn't vanish with the internet.

26. Medical Alerts and 911 Together

How the two fit, without giving medical advice.

Many folks who care about 911 also use, or are thinking about, a medical alert pendant — the button you press to summon help. These work alongside 911, not instead of it. When you press the button, it contacts a monitoring center, and the operator there can talk to you and, if needed, send emergency help to your home. It's covered in depth in its own guide.

The one 911 point to carry over here: older medical alert devices that were built to dial out over a copper phone line can fail quietly on an internet phone. A cellular medical alert, which doesn't use your phone line at all, sidesteps that problem. If you use or are considering one, call the monitoring company and confirm how it connects, and test it.

WATCH OUT

Don't assume a medical alert and a home phone back each other up. An older pendant may fail on an internet phone just as the phone itself might in an outage. Confirm with the monitoring company, and keep a charged cell phone regardless.

27. Accidental and Hang-Up 911 Calls

What to do if you dial by mistake.

Pocket dials and mistaken 911 calls happen, and there's a right way to handle them that saves everyone trouble. If you dial 911 by accident, don't just hang up. Stay on the line and tell the dispatcher it was a mistake and that there's no emergency. A silent hang-up often means they have to call back or even send an officer to make sure you're safe.

This matters a bit more on cell phones and newer phones, where accidental dials are easy. If you get a call back from 911 after a hang-up, answer it and reassure them. They're not annoyed — they just need to confirm you're alright. A ten-second conversation prevents a wasted emergency run.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you ever dial 911 by mistake, stay on the line and say so. It's not embarrassing and you won't be in trouble — it simply saves the dispatchers from having to send someone to check on you.

28. Teaching the Whole Household

Everyone under the roof should know the plan.

Safety works best when it isn't a secret kept by one person. Whoever lives in or regularly visits your home — a spouse, a grandchild who stays over, a caregiver — should know the basics of how to reach help from your phones. It only takes a short conversation.

- Where the charged cell phone is kept.
- That the home phone needs power and internet, and may be down in an outage.
- The full home address, and where it's written down.
- How to use the medical alert, if there is one.
- To stay on the line with 911 and do what the dispatcher says.

Grandchildren in particular are quick studies and love being trusted with something important. A five-minute talk means that if something happens while they're visiting, they know exactly what to do instead of freezing.

29. Power Backup Done Simply

A little battery goes a long way for safety.

Because the outage risk is the real weak spot of an internet phone, let me spend a moment on the simplest way to cover it, so it doesn't feel like a big project. You don't need a whole-house generator to keep your phone alive in a storm. A small battery backup does the job for a reasonable cost.

- A provider's own battery module — made to fit the phone box; ask if it's included or extra.
- A small uninterruptible power supply, a UPS — a battery box you plug the modem, router, and phone base into.
- A cellular home base, which has its own battery built in and doesn't lean on your internet. The batteries inside any backup wear out over a few years, so note the date you installed it and plan to swap it when it ages. And remember, a battery in your house keeps your gear running, but it can't fix an outage at the provider's end — which is the final reason the charged cell phone always belongs in the plan.

TIP

A battery backup for your internet gear is one of the most worthwhile small purchases a home can make. I'm glad to set one up, size it to your equipment, and show you how to tell when the battery needs replacing.

30. Why I Don't Lose Sleep Over This

The reassuring truth, once the setup is right.

After all these cautions, I don't want to leave you anxious, because the honest truth is that a properly set-up internet phone is a perfectly safe way to reach 911. Millions of homes use exactly these services every day, and emergency help reaches them just fine. The whole point of this guide is simply to make sure your setup is one of the proper ones — and once it is, you can stop worrying.

Think of it like a seatbelt. You don't fret about it every time you get in the car; you just buckle up once and drive. The 911 setup is the same — do it right once, check it once a year, and otherwise live your life. The phone on your counter works like it always has, and help is one call away.

GOOD TO KNOW

A correctly set-up internet phone, a battery backup, and a charged cell phone together give you a safety net as strong as the old copper line ever offered — and in some ways stronger. Set it up once, and rest easy.

31. A Yearly 911 Check-Up

A simple habit that keeps you covered.

Your 911 setup can quietly drift out of date — a battery wears out, you moved the box and forgot to update the address, the cell phone you kept charged has gone missing. So I suggest a yearly 911 check-up, tied to a date you'll remember, like the change to daylight saving time when you're already thinking about smoke detector batteries.

- 1 Dial 933, or call your provider, and confirm your registered address is still right.
- 2 Check that the battery backup still holds a charge; replace it if it's old.
- 3 Make sure the backup cell phone is where it should be and charged.
- 4 Test your medical alert, if you have one.
- 5 Re-read the address card by each phone and make sure it's still correct.

TIP

Pair your 911 check-up with the twice-a-year smoke detector battery routine. Same idea — a few minutes, once a year, keeps the safety net in good repair.

32. What I'd Tell My Own Neighbor

The short, honest version.

After 30+ years of professional experience helping folks through exactly this kind of change, here's the plain advice I'd give over the fence about 911 on a newer phone. Don't assume it knows where you are. Call your provider and confirm your registered address is correct. Test it with 933 if they offer it. Add a battery backup. And keep a charged cell phone where you can grab it.

That's really the whole thing. The technology behind your phone has changed, but with those few steps, dialing 911 from your home will send help to your door just like the old line did — and your cell phone covers you even when the power and internet don't. That's a safe setup, and it's entirely within reach.

GOOD TO KNOW

If any of this feels like a lot, that's normal. You can hand the whole 911 setup to me — checking the address, testing it, the battery, the backups — and I'll make sure it's done right in one visit.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

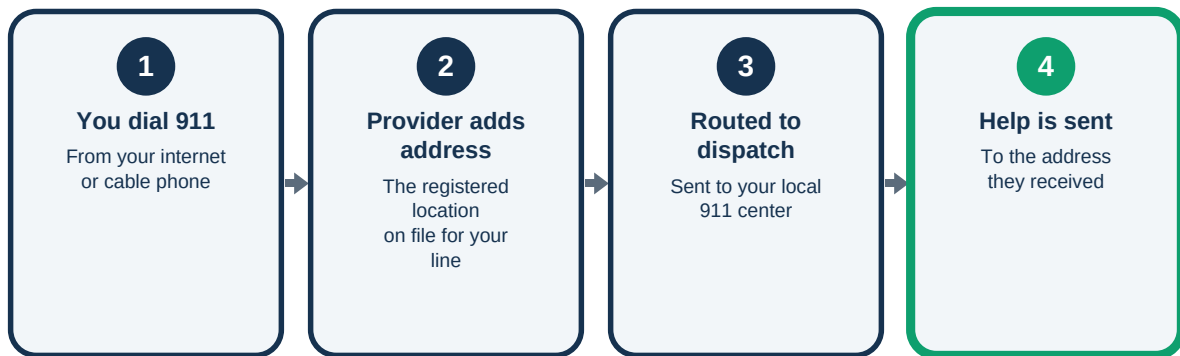
Keep this by the phone. I want to... Do this. Make sure 911 knows my address — call your provider and confirm your registered 911 address is correct and complete. Test it — dial 933 to hear your address read back, if your provider offers it; never dial a real 911 to test. Stay covered in an outage — add a battery backup to the phone box, and keep a charged cell phone as the final backstop. Keep it right when I move the box — update the registered address any time the box changes buildings. On any 911 call — say your address out loud first, before anything else. Get help — call Bill: (330) 200-8042.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

How 911 Works on an Internet Phone

Your registered address is what guides help to your door



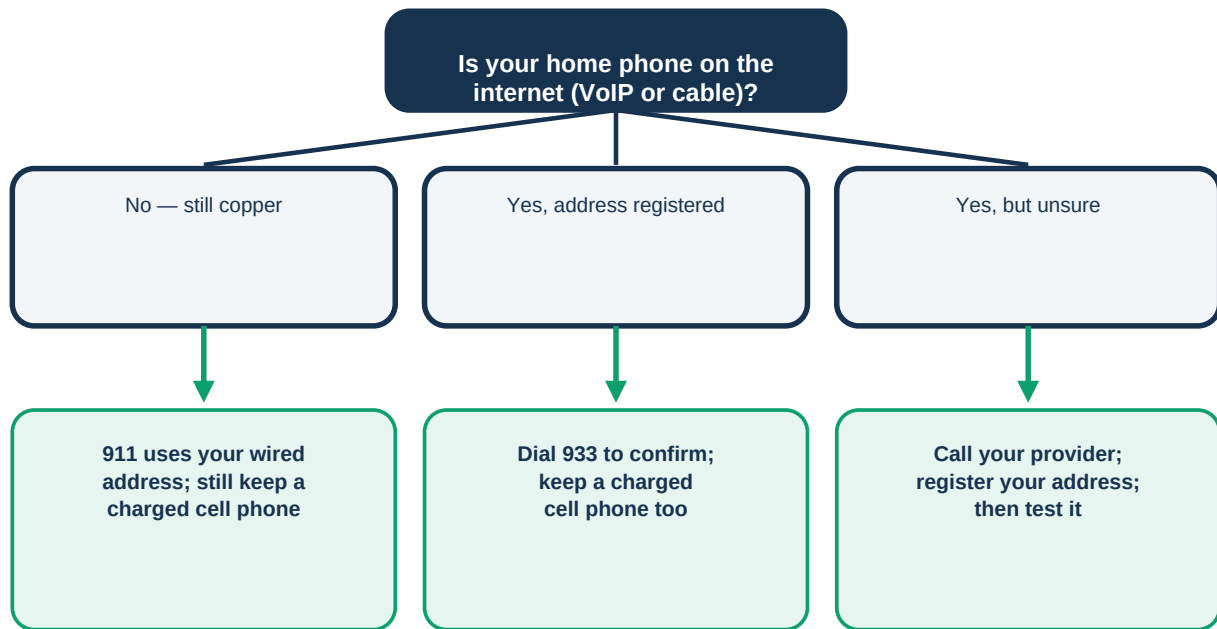
If the registered address is wrong, help goes to the wrong place.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Is My 911 Set Up Right?

Three quick checks for peace of mind



In a power or internet outage, a cell phone is your surest way to reach 911.

When in doubt, call your provider and ask them to confirm your registered address.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: **billshometech.com/book** · **bill@billshometech.com**

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.