



An Extended Guide · No. 1356

Why an ATS Is a Licensed Electrician's Job

What a pro does,
and where I fit in

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! Read this first — this is licensed electrician's work

An automatic transfer switch is wired straight into your home's main electrical panel and works hand in hand with a standby generator. That makes installing one a licensed electrician's job from start to finish — almost always with a permit and an inspection — and never a do-it-yourself project. A big part of what the switch does is keep your generator's power from ever backfeeding onto the utility lines, which protects the crews working to bring your power back. Getting that right is exactly why the work belongs to a licensed pro. My job is to help you understand it, choose it, and live with it — not to open your panel. This guide is about exactly that — who does this work, why it must be a licensed pro, and where a helper like me fits in.

Why this one is never do-it-yourself

I'm a great believer in doing things yourself where you safely can — but an automatic transfer switch is firmly not one of them. This guide explains, honestly and plainly, why installing one is always a licensed electrician's job, what that professional brings, and where a friendly helper like me fits in.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County. I help folks with all sorts of home tech, hands-on — but I'm a tech helper, not a licensed electrician, and I'd never pretend otherwise. Part of helping you well is being clear about where my help ends and a licensed pro's begins.

Understanding the roles — electrician, gas pro, me, and you — makes the whole project clearer and safer. Let's walk through who does what, and how to find an electrician you can trust.

★ I'll help you find the right pro

Lining up a trustworthy licensed electrician is one of the most useful things I do. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you find and vet one.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you understand the roles.

- ❑ Installing a transfer switch is panel work — done wrong, it can be deadly. It's always a licensed electrician's job.
- ❑ A licensed electrician brings training, code knowledge, the permit, insurance, and accountability.
- ❑ Gas or propane connections are a separate licensed gas pro's job.
- ❑ I'm a tech helper, not an electrician — I help you choose, plan, and understand, and line up the pro.
- ❑ You provide your goals, your must-run list, and your decisions.
- ❑ Finding a good, licensed, insured electrician who pulls permits is half the battle — and I can help.

✓ Right work, right person

The whole idea is simple: each part of this job goes to the person licensed and trained for it. That's not bureaucracy — it's how you stay safe.

Why this isn't a do-it-yourself project

Even for a confident, handy person, this is one to leave to a pro. Here's the honest why.

An automatic transfer switch ties into your main electrical panel and, done wrong, can defeat the very isolation that keeps your generator's power off the utility lines — a danger to utility crews and your home. Panel work also means working near high, dangerous voltage. And a mistake here often doesn't announce itself; it can look and work fine while hiding a fault that only shows up at the worst moment.

So this isn't like hanging a light fixture or swapping an outlet. The stakes are life-and-death, the work is code-governed, and it legally requires a permit and inspection. No amount of handiness changes that — it's simply the wrong project to take on yourself.

! A hidden mistake is the real danger

The frightening part isn't a spark you'd notice — it's a wiring mistake that stays invisible until a lineman touches a line he thought was dead. That's why this work belongs to a licensed pro, every time.

What a licensed electrician brings

Hiring a licensed electrician isn't just about the wiring — it's about everything that surrounds it.

- **Training and expertise:** years of learning to work safely with your panel and high voltage.
- **Code knowledge:** they know the rules that keep the installation safe, and how to meet them.
- **The permit and inspection:** they pull the permit and see the job through the official process.
- **Insurance and licensing:** if something goes wrong, a licensed, insured pro stands behind the work — you're protected.
- **Accountability:** a real business you can call back, not a one-time favor with no recourse.

✓ You're buying more than labor

When you hire a licensed electrician, you're buying training, protection, and accountability along with the work. That's exactly what high-stakes wiring calls for.

What the electrician actually does

Here's the electrician's part of the job, plainly.

The electrician assesses your panel and needs, sizes the system, pulls the permit, mounts and wires the transfer switch, connects it to the generator, and runs the control wiring that lets the two work together. They coordinate any gas work, see the job through inspection, and start up and test the system before calling it done.

In short, everything that touches your panel, your wiring, and the generator's electrical connection is theirs. Our installation-day guide walks through how all of this unfolds when the crew arrives.

✓ The whole electrical picture

From the first look at your panel to the final test, the electrical side of your backup system is the licensed electrician's responsibility — start to finish.

What the gas professional does

If your standby generator runs on natural gas or propane, there's a second licensed trade involved.

Connecting a generator to a natural-gas line or a propane tank is gas work — a separate licensed specialty from electrical, with its own permit and inspection. A gas leak is every bit as dangerous as a wiring fault, so this connection goes to the properly licensed gas professional, not the electrician moonlighting or a handy neighbor.

Usually your electrician or generator installer coordinates the gas pro, so you're not managing two contractors. But it's worth knowing the fuel connection is its own trade and its own permitted, inspected piece — another reason a standby install is squarely professional work.

! Gas is its own licensed trade

Never let anyone but a licensed gas professional connect your generator to gas or propane. It's as safety-critical as the wiring, and it's not a corner where 'close enough' is ever acceptable.

Where I fit in — honestly

Since I'm the one writing this, let me be perfectly clear about my own role.

I'm a tech helper, not a licensed electrician or gas professional. I don't do panel work, generator wiring, or gas connections, and I never would — your safety deserves the real thing. What I do is help you understand your options, build your must-run list, weigh the choices, and line up a licensed pro I trust. Then, once it's installed, I help you learn and feel comfortable with your own system.

Think of me as your friendly guide and translator through the whole process — someone in your corner who has no generator or switch to sell you, and whose only job is helping you get it right.

★ Your helper, start to finish

From your first questions to the day after install, I'm glad to be the patient, plain-English helper at your side — while the licensed pros handle the wiring. Call (330) 200-8042.

What you, the homeowner, do

Your role is real and important — and pleasantly free of wiring.

You decide what you want backed up (your must-run list), choose between the options with help, pick a trustworthy electrician, give access to your home, and make the final decisions. After install, you keep the paperwork, learn to recognize the self-test, and keep the generator's area clear. That's the whole of it — knowing your home and making good choices, not doing dangerous work.

It's a genuinely nice division of labor: you bring the knowledge only you have — what matters to your household — and the pros bring the skills only they should use. Everyone does what they're best and safest at.

✓ Your expertise is your own home

Nobody knows your home and your needs better than you. That knowledge is your real contribution — far more valuable to a good outcome than any attempt to do the wiring yourself.

How to find a good electrician

A great system installed poorly isn't a great system, so finding the right pro matters as much as the equipment.

Look for a licensed electrician experienced specifically with backup power and transfer switches — it's a particular skill. Ask friends and neighbors who've had one installed, check that the electrician is licensed and insured, and favor one who pulls permits as a matter of course and explains things plainly. Someone local, who'll still be around to service it later, is worth a lot.

This is exactly where I can help most. I keep a short list of trustworthy local pros, and I'm glad to help you find one and get honest quotes — so you're not starting from a cold internet search.

★ Let me point you to someone good

Finding a trustworthy electrician is half the battle, and one I'm glad to help with. Tell me your project and I'll help you find someone reliable. Call (330) 200-8042.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

The need for a licensed pro is the same everywhere, but finding the right one, and the trades involved, can look a little different in town versus the country.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, there are usually plenty of electricians who do backup installs routinely, and many homes use a natural-gas line, keeping the fuel side to one straightforward connection. References from neighbors are often easy to come by.

- More electricians nearby often means easier comparison and quicker scheduling.
- A natural-gas connection keeps the gas side to a single, routine hookup.
- Neighbors who've had installs done are a great source of references.
- Still confirm licensing, insurance, and that they pull permits — everywhere.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, you may need to look a little harder for an electrician experienced with rural backup and well systems, and propane usually means coordinating a gas pro and a tank supplier. A local pro who knows well pumps and country properties is worth seeking out.

- Look for an electrician experienced with rural backup and well-pump loads specifically.
- Propane means coordinating a licensed gas pro and your tank supplier.
- Distances can mean fewer options — start the search early and vet carefully.
- A pro who understands well systems will size and plan your backup far better.

★ I'll help you find the right pro for your home

Town or country, I can help you find a licensed electrician suited to your setup — including one who knows well systems, if you're rural. Call (330) 200-8042.

How to vet the electrician you're considering

Once you have a name or two, a little checking gives you real confidence.

- ❑ Confirm they're licensed and carry insurance — ask, and don't be shy about it.
- ❑ Ask whether they pull permits (they should, always).
- ❑ Ask about their experience with transfer switches and standby generators specifically.
- ❑ Request references, or ask neighbors who've used them.
- ❑ Notice whether they explain things plainly and welcome your questions.
- ❑ Get the quote in writing, itemized, including the permit.

✓ How they answer tells you a lot

Beyond the credentials, pay attention to how they treat you. Patience with your questions and clear explanations are signs of someone you'll be glad to have working in your home.

Red flags to walk away from

Just as important as what to look for is what to steer clear of.

- **Suggesting you skip the permit** to save money — an immediate deal-breaker.
- **Won't confirm licensing or insurance** — if they hedge, keep looking.
- **Pressure or rushing** — a good pro gives you time to decide.
- **A quote far below all the others** — it often means corners will be cut somewhere you can't see.
- **Dismissing your questions** — if they make you feel foolish for asking, imagine how they'll treat a problem later.

! Cheapest is rarely the bargain it seems

A quote that's dramatically lower than the rest usually isn't a gift — it's a sign of skipped permits, thin insurance, or cut corners. For life-safety work, that's the last place to bargain-hunt.

Getting honest, comparable quotes

A little structure makes comparing quotes fair and clear.

Ask two or three electricians to quote the same thing — your must-run list, whole-home or managed, and the fuel you'll use — so you're comparing like with like. Ask each to itemize: generator, switch, any load-management module, fuel connection, install, and permit. That way a low total doesn't hide a missing piece you'll pay for later.

I won't quote you numbers — every home and pro differs too much — but I'm glad to help you read the quotes side by side and understand what each includes. The goal is a fair comparison, not just the smallest number.

★ I'll help you compare quotes

Send me the quotes you gather and I'll help you compare them fairly — making sure each covers the whole job, so you choose on real value. Call (330) 200-8042.

The value of a lasting relationship

You're not just buying an install — you're starting a relationship with someone who'll service your system for years.

A standby system needs occasional professional service, and someday it may need a repair. Having a trustworthy local electrician who installed it, knows it, and will answer the phone is worth a great deal. That's part of why local and licensed beats the cheapest distant bid — you're choosing someone to call, not just someone to hire once.

It's also why I stay in the picture after install: between your electrician's visits, I'm the friendly, patient helper you can call for the small questions and the reassurance, so you're never left puzzling alone.

✓ Choose someone you can call again

When you pick your electrician, imagine calling them in two years with a question or a hiccup. Choose the one you'd actually want to reach then, not just today.

Safety, briefly

This whole guide is about safety through the right people; a couple of truths round it out.

! The generator still makes carbon monoxide

A standby generator burns fuel, so its exhaust still contains carbon monoxide — an invisible, odorless gas that is dangerous to breathe. Yours lives permanently outdoors, and your installer sets it the manufacturer's required distance from windows, doors, and vents so the exhaust drifts safely away from the house. You never have to place it yourself, but do keep that area clear, never box the unit in or enclose it to quiet it down, and keep tested carbon-monoxide alarms inside the house all the same.

And remember: the reason this work goes to licensed pros is the isolation that keeps your generator's power off the utility lines, plus the dangers of panel and gas work. Any future change or repair goes to a licensed electrician or gas pro too — never a do-it-yourself fix, and never me.

! Even I stay in my lane

I help with plenty around your home, but panel work, generator wiring, and gas connections are not among them — for your safety. Anyone who offers to do that work without the proper license isn't helping you.

Common mistakes in hiring

A few avoidable missteps come up when folks choose who does the work.

- **Hiring on price alone**, and getting skipped permits or cut corners you can't see.
- **Skipping the license and insurance check** — leaving yourself unprotected if something goes wrong.
- **Letting a handy friend attempt it** — goodwill is no substitute for a license on life-safety work.
- **Not getting it in writing**, then disputing what was promised.
- **Choosing someone you can't stand talking to** — you'll want to call them again someday.

! Goodwill isn't a license

A handy friend or relative offering to save you money on this is offering you real risk. This is one job where love and good intentions are no substitute for training, a license, and insurance.

Questions to ask an electrician

These quickly separate a pro you'll trust from one to pass on.

Q: Are you licensed and insured, and can you confirm it?

A clear yes, without hesitation, is what you want. Anyone who hedges here isn't the one.

Q: How much experience do you have with transfer switches?

This is a particular skill. Favor someone who does these installs regularly over a generalist.

Q: Will you pull the permit and see it through inspection?

The answer should be yes, as a matter of course. It's non-negotiable.

Q: Will you walk me through operating my system when it's done?

A good pro takes the time to make sure you understand your own system before they leave.

✓ There's no silly question

You're inviting someone to do life-safety work in your home. You have every right to ask these plainly — and a good electrician expects and welcomes them.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about who does this work, answered plainly.

Q: Why can't I install a transfer switch myself?

It's panel work near dangerous voltage that, done wrong, can defeat the isolation protecting utility crews — often invisibly. It's code-governed, legally requires a permit, and belongs to a licensed electrician.

Q: Can a handy friend or relative do it to save money?

Please, no. Goodwill is no substitute for a license, training, and insurance on life-safety work. A hidden mistake here can be deadly and leaves you unprotected.

Q: Do I need a separate person for the gas connection?

Usually yes — gas or propane work is a separate licensed trade with its own permit. Your electrician or installer typically coordinates the gas pro.

Q: What do you (Bill) do, exactly?

I'm a tech helper, not an electrician. I help you choose, plan, and understand your system, and line up a trustworthy licensed pro — then help you get comfortable with it afterward. I never do the wiring.

Q: How do I find a trustworthy electrician?

Look for licensed, insured, experienced with backup power, pulls permits, and explains things plainly. Ask neighbors, and I'm glad to help you find and vet one.

★ Need help finding your pro?

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you find a licensed electrician you can trust with your home.

A simple hiring checklist

Keep this handy as you choose who'll do the work.

- ☐ Licensed and insured — confirmed, not assumed.
- ☐ Experienced with transfer switches and standby generators.
- ☐ Pulls permits and sees the job through inspection.
- ☐ Coordinates any needed gas professional.
- ☐ Explains things plainly and welcomes questions.
- ☐ Provides an itemized, written quote including the permit.
- ☐ Local, so they can service the system down the road.

✓ Tick the boxes, hire with confidence

When a candidate checks every one of these, you're not gambling — you're making a well-founded choice for a safe, lasting installation.

What I do to help — in full

To pull it all together, here's my role from start to finish.

- **Before:** I help you understand the options, build your must-run list, and find and vet a licensed electrician.
- **During quoting:** I help you compare quotes fairly and spot red flags.
- **What only licensed pros do:** the electrical and gas work, the permit, and the inspection.
- **After:** I help you understand and get comfortable with your own system, and I'm your friendly first call for small questions.

★ In your corner, not the panel

I'm the helper in your corner through the whole thing — while the licensed pros handle the wiring. That's exactly how it should be. Reach me at (330) 200-8042.

The bottom line

Here's the whole guide in a few plain sentences.

Installing an automatic transfer switch is life-safety panel work, so it always goes to a licensed electrician, with any fuel connection going to a licensed gas pro. A helper like me guides you through choosing, planning, finding the right pro, and understanding your system — but never does the wiring. You bring the knowledge of your own home and the final decisions.

Get the right people on the right parts, and you end up with a safe, well-installed system and folks you can call for years. That's the whole aim — and it's a very achievable one.

✓ Right people, right roles, good outcome

There's real peace of mind in knowing each part of this job is in the right hands. Let the licensed pros do what only they should, lean on a helper for the rest, and you can't go far wrong.

You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made finding the right pro for your transfer switch feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

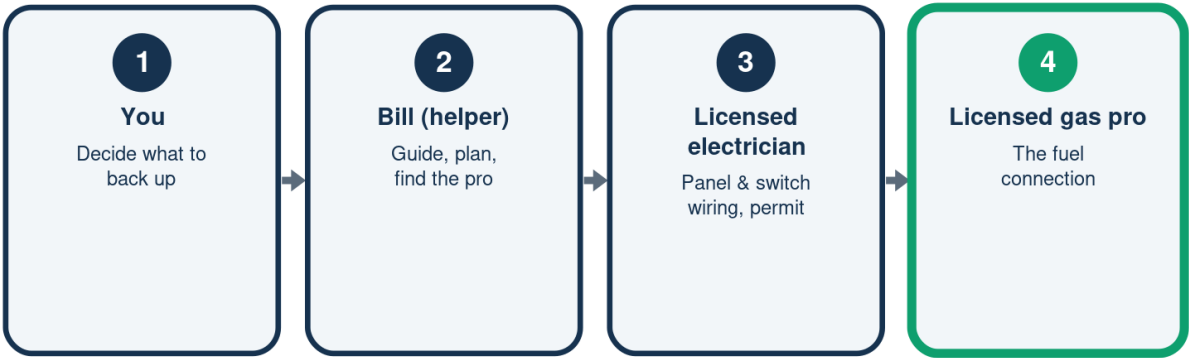
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I don't do the licensed electrical or gas work myself — for that I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro.

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

Who Does What

Right work, right person



Each part goes to the person trained and licensed for it.

What a Licensed Electrician Brings

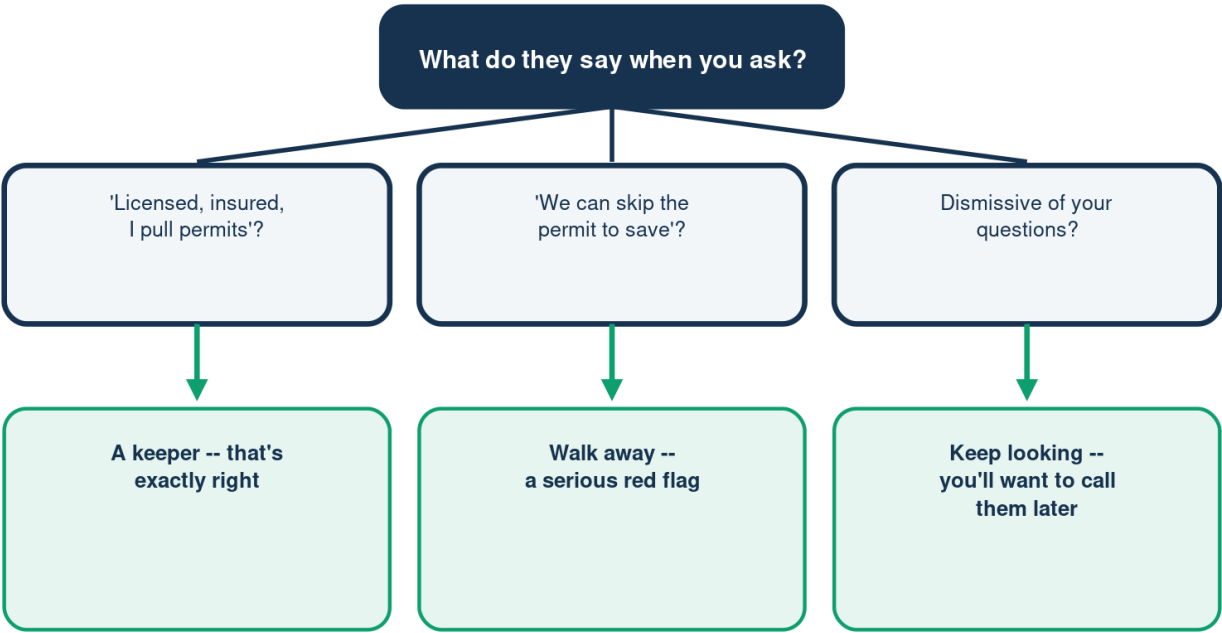
You're buying more than labor

	What	Why it matters
Training	Safe panel work	Near high voltage
Code knowledge	A compliant install	That passes inspection
Insurance	Protection	If something goes wrong
Accountability	Someone to call	For years to come

High-stakes wiring calls for training, protection, and recourse.

Is This the Right Electrician?

Listen to how they answer



The cheapest quote often hides skipped permits or cut corners.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.

A Quick Hiring Checklist

Tick these before you hire

	Check	Look for
Credentials	[]	Licensed & insured
Experience	[]	Transfer switches
Process	[]	Pulls permits
Manner	[]	Explains plainly

Local, so they can service your system down the road.



Need a Real Person?

You do not have to remember all of it.
You just have to remember you can call.
Friendly, in-home tech help -- I come to you.

BILL'S PROMISE

If you are not 100% happy with a visit, I will make it right -- or refund it. No awkwardness, no fine print. That is how I would want to be treated.

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— Bill

Prefer help without a visit?

Bill can screen-share and fix many things remotely — a flat \$49, free for Support Plan members.



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 comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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