



An Extended Guide · No. 1640

Your Safe-Fuel Checklist

The whole category
on a few calm pages

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

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! Read this first — carbon monoxide is the real danger

A running generator's exhaust contains carbon monoxide — an invisible, odorless gas that can kill in minutes. Never run a generator indoors, in a garage, in a shed, or on a porch, not even with the door open and a fan going. Run it outside only, well away from the house — the safety agencies say at least 20 feet — with the exhaust pointed away from every window, door, and vent. Put battery-backup carbon-monoxide alarms on each floor and outside the bedrooms. If an alarm sounds, or anyone feels dizzy, sick, or sleepy, get everyone into fresh air first and ask questions later. This guide ties the whole fuel-safety category together, but it is a map, not a substitute for the safety pages themselves — when in doubt, read the dedicated guide and lead with the same caution every time.

Let's walk the whole fuel-safety category, calmly

This is the one guide that ties the whole set together — a calm walk through every part of storing and using fuel safely, with a pointer to the dedicated guide whenever you want more depth.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. This guide is deliberately broad rather than deep — think of it as the table of contents you can actually read front to back, with each themed page pointing you toward the guide that goes further.

You don't need to read every guide in this set to be safe. Reading this one, and following its checklists, covers the essentials — then you can reach for a dedicated guide by name whenever a specific question comes up.

★ There's no silly question here

If anything on these pages leaves you wanting more detail, or you're just not sure where to start, that's exactly the kind of thing I'm glad to help with. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

The whole category, on one page

If you remember only these things, you'll have the whole fuel-safety picture.

- ❑ Use an approved container for whatever fuel you store, and keep the amount modest.
- ❑ Store it away from any flame, spark, pilot light, or a generator that's running or still hot.
- ❑ Rotate gasoline; propane keeps for years, but the tank still needs checking.
- ❑ Refuel only when equipment is off and cool, and always outdoors.
- ❑ Put working carbon monoxide alarms in the house, and know the smell of a gas leak.
- ❑ When you're unsure how much you may store, ask your local fire department.

✓ This page is the whole guide, compressed

Everything else in this guide just unpacks these six ideas, one theme at a time, with a pointer to more depth wherever you want it.

Checklist: the right container

Whatever fuel you store, the container is where safety starts.

A good container isn't complicated, but it does have to be the right one — built and rated for the fuel it holds, not improvised from something else in the garage.

- ☐ Gasoline goes only in an approved, sealing fuel can — never a jug or bottle.
- ☐ Diesel gets its own approved container, kept separate and clearly labeled.
- ☐ Propane stays in its original cylinder or tank — never transferred to another container.
- ☐ Every gasoline container is labeled with its contents and the date filled.
- ☐ The container is a size you can lift and pour comfortably.

✓ The full depth is one guide away

For the complete picture on cans, caps, and sizing, see our safe gasoline storage guide.

Checklist: how much and rotation

More fuel is not automatically safer — fresh and modest beats large and forgotten.

The right amount is the amount you'll actually use and rotate, sized to the outage you realistically expect.

- ❑ Keep enough gasoline for the outage you expect, plus a modest cushion — not a hoard.
- ❑ Use the oldest fuel first, and refill with fresh.
- ❑ Add stabilizer to gasoline that will sit for a while.
- ❑ Propane does not need rotating — just keep enough sound, full cylinders.
- ❑ Set a recurring reminder so rotation happens without you having to remember on your own.

✓ Two guides cover this pair in full

Our how-much-and-rotation guide and our stabilizer guide dig into sizing and freshness well beyond this page.

Checklist: where it lives — and where never

Location does as much for safety as the container itself.

A short, firm list of places to avoid makes the safe choices easy by comparison.

- ☐ Never inside the house, a basement, or any living space.
- ☐ Never near a water heater, furnace, stove, or any pilot light.
- ☐ Propane cylinders live outdoors only, never in an attached garage.
- ☐ Never right next to a generator that's running or still hot.
- ☐ A detached shed, or a genuinely clear corner of the garage, is the safe spot.

! One guide, every reason why

Our guide on where you should never store fuel covers every one of these, and explains why vapor makes distance matter so much.

Checklist: propane cylinders

Propane's long shelf life is a real comfort, but the cylinder itself still needs a few habits of its own.

A few quick checks keep a propane cylinder safe and ready between uses.

Check	Why it matters
Stored upright	Keeps the valve working as designed
Outdoors, ventilated	Propane sinks and pools if it escapes
Valve closed, cap on	Protects it when not connected
Free of dents or rust	A damaged cylinder is a real hazard

✓ **Sizes, refills, and recertification**

Our propane cylinder storage guide and our propane tanks guide cover sizes, refills, and recertification dates in full.

Checklist: diesel, if you keep it

Diesel follows most of the same rules as gasoline, with a couple of habits all its own.

If diesel isn't part of your setup, feel free to skip ahead — if it is, these habits are worth knowing.

- ☐ Diesel gets its own approved container, never mixed with gasoline containers.
- ☐ Store it away from the same ignition sources as gasoline — the same never-store rules apply.
- ☐ Keep water out of stored diesel — water causes its own problems in the tank.
- ☐ Cold weather can cause diesel to gel — plan ahead if you're in a cold climate.
- ☐ If you don't keep diesel, this page is one you can skip entirely.

✓ The full depth, including winter

Our diesel storage and winter gelling guide covers all of this, including cold-weather habits, in depth.

Checklist: safe refueling

The moment fuel actually moves is where a lot of small habits earn their keep.

Whether you're filling a can at the station or the generator itself, the same handful of habits apply.

- ☐ Refuel only when the generator or equipment is switched off and has cooled.
- ☐ Set the can on the ground to fill it, never in a truck bed or on a seat.
- ☐ Fill slowly and stop short of the top, to leave room for the fuel to expand.
- ☐ No smoking, sparks, or open flame anywhere nearby.
- ☐ Refuel outdoors, never in a garage or shed, even to escape the weather.

! Two guides worth reading together

Our guide on refueling only when it's off and cool and our guide on static and fire safety when refueling both cover this moment in full — it's worth reading both.

Checklist: leaks and carbon monoxide

These two dangers get confused, and each deserves its own quick answer.

One you can smell, and one you can't — knowing the difference is most of staying safe from both.

Q: What does a gas leak smell like?

A distinct, added rotten-egg smell in propane and natural gas — if you smell it, leave first, then call from a safe distance.

Q: What does carbon monoxide smell like?

Nothing at all — it's invisible and odorless, which is exactly why a generator always runs outdoors and every home needs working CO alarms.

Q: What's the one rule for both?

Get everyone to fresh air, then call for help. Never pause to investigate first.

! Two dedicated guides, full depth

Our gas-leak guide and our carbon monoxide guide cover both dangers, and the right response to each, in full depth.

Checklist: disposal and old fuel

Even with the best habits, fuel and containers eventually reach the end of the line.

Getting rid of old fuel or a failing can properly is as much part of safety as storing it well in the first place.

- ☐ Never pour old fuel on the ground, down a drain, or into the trash.
- ☐ Take old gasoline and diesel to a household hazardous waste site or collection day.
- ☐ Retire a gas can that's cracked, brittle, swollen, or no longer seals.
- ☐ An empty-seeming propane cylinder still holds some fuel — dispose of or exchange it properly too.
- ☐ When in doubt about fuel's age or condition, don't gamble the engine on it.

✓ A full how-to, place by place

Our guide on disposing of old fuel safely covers where to take it, wherever you live.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Every checklist in this guide flexes a little depending on where you live — here's the shape it usually takes.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or a close-in suburb, tighter storage space and closer neighbors point toward keeping everything modest and close at hand.

- A can or two of gasoline and a spare propane cylinder cover most in-town needs.
- Check city and homeowners' association rules before storing more than that.
- An attached garage is common — keep the far-corner rule strict, per our guide on where never to store fuel.
- A station or exchange point is usually a short drive, even mid-outage.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, more room, longer outages, and a well pump that depends on the generator point toward a somewhat larger, still modest reserve.

- A detached barn or shed away from the house is often the best storage spot of all.
- Plan for a longer outage and store some drinking water if you're on a well.
- A larger propane tank or dealer relationship can make sense — see our home propane supply guide.
- Ask your local fire department about limits for a rural or farm property before building up a supply.

★ Not sure which checklist fits you?

Tell me a bit about your home and how you use backup power, and I'll help you build the right version of this checklist for you. Call (330) 200-8042.

Checklist: seasonal and long-term storage

Equipment that sits unused for a season needs a plan of its own.

Deciding ahead of time whether a machine will run occasionally or sit idle for months makes the off-season much simpler.

- ❑ Decide each season whether equipment will run occasionally or sit unused for months.
- ❑ For a machine that will sit, either stabilize the fuel or drain it, following your manual.
- ❑ Exercise a generator briefly now and then, even during a quiet season.
- ❑ Cold weather brings its own habits for propane and diesel — see the dedicated guides.
- ❑ A calendar reminder tied to the seasons keeps this from being forgotten.

✓ Three guides for the deeper detail

Our guide on long-term storage and draining for the off-season, our cold-weather propane guide, and our fuel-line and carburetor care guide all dig deeper into this.

Checklist: before a storm

Good storm prep is mostly your everyday habits, done a few days early.

If your supply is already rotated, getting ready for a forecast storm should feel calm, not frantic.

- ☐ Start getting ready as soon as a storm appears in the forecast, not the night before.
- ☐ Test-start the generator, and top up rotated fuel and propane.
- ☐ Store some drinking water if you're on a well.
- ☐ Test carbon monoxide alarms and refresh batteries.
- ☐ Resist a big last-minute stash — top up, don't hoard.

✓ Two guides for the full walk-through

Our storm fuel-prep guide and our runtime and fuel planning guide walk through this in full.

Which guide covers what

If a specific worry is on your mind, here's roughly where to look.

This guide stays intentionally broad. Whenever a page here points you to a dedicated guide by name, that's the one with the real depth — this page just helps you find it fast.

Topic	Guide
Approved containers	Safe gasoline storage
Keeping fuel fresh	Stabilizer, ethanol-free
Propane basics	Propane cylinder storage, propane tanks
Natural gas	Natural gas basics
Fuel for your generator	Matching fuel to your generator
Moving fuel	Transporting fuel
Spills and leaks	Spill cleanup, gas-leak guide
Rules on quantity	Fire-code guide

✓ **Come back to this page anytime**

You don't have to remember this list — bookmark or print this page and return to it whenever you need it.

If you remember nothing else: three habits

Every guide in this set boils down to a small number of habits that matter most. Here they are, together.

★ Habit one: the right container, modest amount

An approved container, a sensible amount, and a rotation habit solve most of fuel storage's risk before you even think about where to put it.

! Habit two: distance from ignition and heat

Fuel and propane both stay well away from any flame, pilot light, or a generator that's running or still hot — no exceptions, ever.

✓ Habit three: ask when you're unsure

Whether it's a fire-code limit, a licensed-pro job, or a question about your own setup, asking costs nothing and settles it for good.

Keep the whole plan in one drawer

A plan that lives only in your head is easy to lose track of. Put it on paper instead.

A single page in a drawer with your home papers can hold everything you'd want to remember mid-outage, without relying on memory.

- ❑ Which containers you use and where they're stored.
- ❑ The date you last rotated your gasoline.
- ❑ Your propane cylinder count and their recertification dates.
- ❑ Your fire department's answer about how much you may store.
- ❑ Bill's number, for the day you'd rather just ask: (330) 200-8042.

★ I'm glad to help you put it together

If you'd like help building this one-page plan for your own household, that's an easy, worthwhile thing to do together. Call (330) 200-8042.

Questions worth asking

Wherever you are in this category, these get you real answers.

Q: Where do I start if I'm setting up fuel storage from scratch?

Start with an approved container and a safe spot — our safe gasoline storage guide and our guide on where never to store fuel are the natural first two reads.

Q: I already store fuel — how do I know if I'm doing it safely?

Walk this guide's checklists page by page. Anywhere you hesitate is worth a closer look at the dedicated guide, or a call to me.

Q: How do I know how much I'm allowed to store?

Call your local fire department — see our fire-code guide for how to ask.

Q: What's the single most important habit in this whole category?

Distance from ignition, every time, for every fuel. Nearly everything else is refinement on top of that one idea.

✓ There's no silly question

Whatever stage you're at with fuel storage, ask until you're confident. That's exactly how this whole category stays simple.

The whole category, in one checklist

This is the long version of page two — pull it out any time you want a full, calm walk-through.

- ☐ My containers are approved, labeled, and a size I can lift.
- ☐ My gasoline is rotated and my propane cylinders are sound and full.
- ☐ Nothing is stored near the house, a pilot light, or a running generator.
- ☐ I refuel only outdoors, off and cool, away from any flame.
- ☐ My carbon monoxide alarms work, and I know the smell of a gas leak.
- ☐ I know how much I'm allowed to store, or I know who to ask.
- ☐ I have a plan for a storm and a plan for the off-season.

★ I'll walk through it with you

If you'd like a second set of eyes on your whole setup, that's exactly the kind of calm, whole-picture visit I enjoy. (330) 200-8042.

The safety habits that run through every page

Every checklist in this guide points back to the same small set of underlying reasons.

Fuel vapor is flammable at levels you might not smell, and it sinks and travels farther than most people expect. Every fuel that burns, whether gasoline, propane, diesel, or natural gas, produces carbon monoxide, an invisible gas that can kill in minutes. Those two facts are the reason nearly every rule in this whole category exists.

Approved containers, modest amounts, safe distance from ignition, refueling off and cool, and working carbon monoxide alarms — each checklist page in this guide is really just that same handful of ideas, applied to a different part of your fuel setup.

! When in doubt, choose the safer option

More distance from a flame, a smaller amount stored, and a call to ask when you're unsure — these three choices are almost never wrong.

Common Questions

The whole-category questions I hear most often, answered plainly.

Q: Do I really need to read every guide in this set?

No — this checklist guide is the map. Read the dedicated guide only for the topic you're actually working on.

Q: What if my situation doesn't fit neatly into 'town' or 'rural'?

Use whichever set of habits fits more of your situation, and call me if you'd like help sorting out the rest.

Q: Is there one guide I should read first?

If you only read one more, make it our guide on where never to store fuel — location prevents more trouble than almost anything else.

Q: What should I do if I'm just plain unsure about something?

Ask. Your local fire department, the manufacturer's manual, a licensed pro for gas or propane work, or me — there's always someone glad to help.

★ Still have a question on your mind?

That's what I'm here for. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll give you a plain, honest answer, wherever you are in this category.

Every guide in this set, in one place

This capstone guide ties everything together — here's the full set, grouped by theme.

For containers and freshness: our safe gasoline storage guide, our stabilizer guide, our ethanol-free guide, our how-much-and-rotation guide, and our guide on where never to store fuel.

For propane and other fuels: our propane cylinder storage guide, our propane tanks guide, our home propane supply guide, our natural gas basics guide, our diesel storage guide, our cold-weather propane guide, and our guide on matching the right fuel to your generator.

For safety in the moment: our carbon monoxide guide, our transporting fuel guide, our spill cleanup guide, our guide on static and fire safety when refueling, our guide on refueling only when it's off and cool, and our gas-leak guide.

For upkeep and planning: our fuel-line and carburetor care guide, our guide on long-term storage and draining for the off-season, our storm fuel-prep guide, our runtime and fuel planning guide, our fire-code guide, and our guide on disposing of old fuel safely.

★ One call covers all of it

You don't have to sort out which guide answers which question. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, describe your setup, and I'll point you straight to the page you need.

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 keeping your whole fuel setup safe, from the can to the shelf 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.

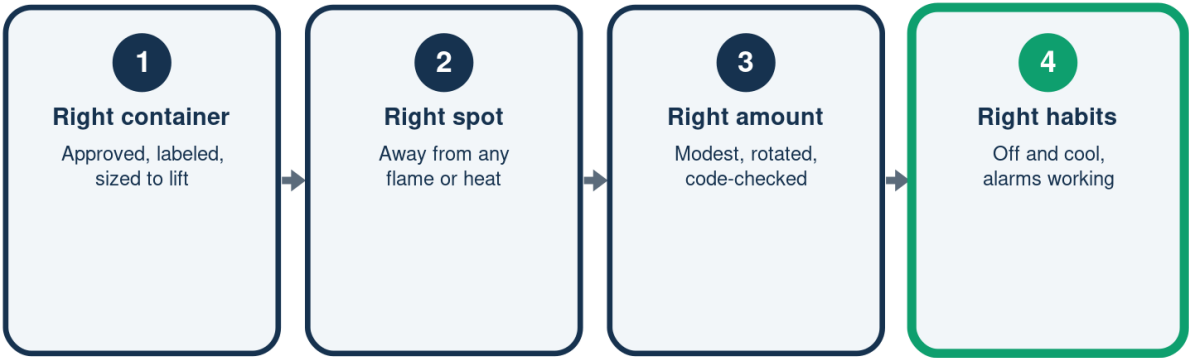
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day,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

Four Big Ideas, Start to Finish

Every guide in this set supports one of these



Every guide in this set supports one of these four ideas.

This Checklist vs. the Dedicated Guides

This guide is the map -- they are the destinations

	This checklist	Dedicated guide
Depth	A quick pass	Full detail
Best for	Calm overview	One topic deep
Read when	Getting oriented	Need the how-to

This guide is the map. The dedicated guides are the destinations.

Town vs. Rural, the Whole Category

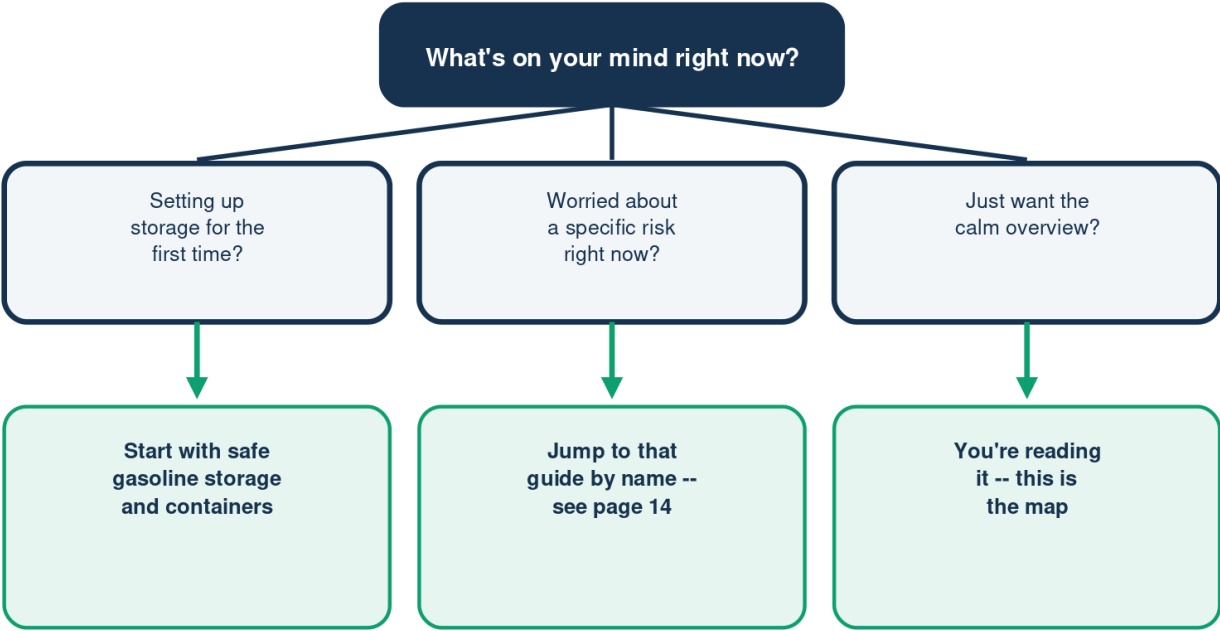
The habits are the same everywhere -- the scale differs

	Town/suburb	Rural/well
Storage size	Modest	Larger
Water plan	City water	Store water
Common fuels	Mostly gasoline	Propane, diesel
Who to ask	Fire dept, HOA	Dept and dealer

The habits are the same everywhere -- only the scale changes.

Where Should You Start in This Guide Set?

A quick way to find your own next page



When truly unsure, call and describe your setup -- that's the fastest map of all.

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



Need a Real Person?

You do not have to remember all of it.
You just have to remember you can call.
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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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