



An Extended Guide · No. 1238

Powering Medical Equipment in an Outage

A careful plan for
oxygen, CPAP, and more

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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. That matters even more here — if anyone in your home depends on breathing equipment, the fresh air this rule protects is exactly what they can least afford to lose.

Let's build a careful plan together

If you or someone you love depends on powered medical equipment — oxygen, a CPAP, a nebulizer, or anything else that needs to be plugged in — an outage is a different kind of worry. This guide is here to help turn that worry into a calm, workable plan.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I want to say something plainly, right at the start: I'm a tech helper, not a doctor or a nurse, and nothing in this guide is medical advice. What I can help with is the equipment and power side of your plan — and that's genuinely a lot of the puzzle.

The most important idea in this whole guide is simple: a generator is one layer of a good plan, not the entire plan. We'll walk through all the layers together — the battery backups, the supplier-provided options, the paperwork worth doing ahead of time, and yes, the generator too — so nothing is riding on any single piece.

Wherever you are in this process, whether you're just starting to think about it or double-checking a plan you already have, take this at your own pace. There's no rush, and there's no such thing as a silly question.

★ You're not doing this alone

This is exactly the kind of planning I love helping families with — calm, practical, and unhurried. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 whenever you're ready to talk it through.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you already have the shape of a solid plan.

- ❑ A generator is one layer of your plan — never the whole plan by itself.
- ❑ Keep manufacturer-approved battery backups and car adapters charged and ready to go.
- ❑ If oxygen is involved, keep supplier-provided backup tanks on hand — they need no power at all.
- ❑ Keep spare portable-concentrator batteries charged and on a rotation.
- ❑ Register with your utility's medical or priority list before you need it.
- ❑ Tell your equipment supplier and your doctor about your plan, and follow their guidance.
- ❑ Prefer an inverter's clean power for sensitive devices, and use a UPS to bridge the gap while a generator starts.
- ❑ Know the signs that mean call 911, and have a plan for somewhere else to go with power.

✓ One idea to hold onto

You don't have to solve this with one perfect device. A few smaller, reliable layers, working together, are a stronger plan than betting everything on one machine.

A generator is one layer, not the whole plan

This is the single most important idea in this guide, so we're starting with it.

It's tempting to think of a generator as the answer to a medical-equipment outage — buy the right one, and you're covered. In reality, a generator is a wonderful piece of the plan, but it's still a machine that has to be started, fueled, and kept running, and machines can have an off day. A good plan never rests its whole weight on one thing.

- Everyday battery backups and car adapters cover short gaps and travel.
- Supplier-provided backups — oxygen tanks, spare concentrator batteries — need no power source at all.
- Your utility's medical-priority registration can mean extra attention when power is being restored.
- The generator covers the longer stretch, once the faster layers have already caught you.
- A relocation plan is your safety net if every layer above is exhausted.

★ We'll build every layer together

You don't have to figure out all of this today, or alone. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll work through it one piece at a time.

Battery backups and car adapters

The fastest layer to lean on, because there's nothing to start up.

Many medical devices have a manufacturer-approved battery backup option, and some can also run from a car adapter using your vehicle as a power source for a while. These are worth having simply because they need no setup in the moment — they're already there, already charged, the instant the power goes out.

- Keep any battery backup charged as a standing habit, not something you check only when a storm's coming.
- Know roughly how long it lasts on a full charge — ask your equipment supplier if the manual doesn't say plainly.
- If a car adapter is an option for your device, confirm with the manufacturer that it's an approved way to power it before you rely on it.

✓ Little habits, checked often

A charged battery backup does you no good if it quietly drained months ago and nobody noticed. Fold a quick check into a routine you already have, like paying bills or watering plants.

For oxygen users: backup tanks are your anchor

If oxygen is part of your life, this is the layer worth leaning on hardest.

A powered oxygen concentrator is wonderful equipment, but it is, by definition, powered — which means an outage takes it offline unless something else steps in. Backup tanks from your oxygen supplier need no electricity at all, which makes them the steadiest layer in your entire plan.

- Ask your supplier how many backup tanks they recommend you keep on hand, and keep that number current.
- Know your prescribed settings by heart, or keep them written down somewhere you'll actually find in a hurry.
- Ask your supplier to show you how to switch to a tank calmly, before you ever need to do it under stress.
- Check tank gauges periodically, the same way you'd check a fuel gauge.

★ I can help with the power side

I'm glad to help make sure your concentrator has reliable backup power when you want that extra layer — but how many tanks you need and your settings are always your supplier's and your doctor's call, not mine.

Spare batteries for portable concentrators

If your equipment is battery-powered to begin with, the plan is mostly about staying ahead of the charge.

- Keep at least one spare battery charged and ready, more if your supplier recommends it.
- Label or date batteries so you know which one to reach for first.
- Keep the charger and any cords together with the batteries, not scattered around the house.
- If you ever travel or plan to relocate during an outage, bring the batteries and charger with you.

✓ Rotate them like you would fuel

A battery that's sat fully charged for a year isn't always as reliable as one that gets used and recharged regularly. Ask your supplier about the best way to keep spares healthy over time.

Register with your utility's medical priority list

A short phone call now, worth having made before you ever need it.

Many utilities keep a list of customers with medical equipment or other critical needs at home, sometimes called a medical priority or critical-care list. Being on it doesn't guarantee anything specific, but it's a simple, free step that puts your household on their radar — often meaning advance notice of planned outages and a flag for restoration crews.

✓ Call and ask

Your utility's customer service line can tell you exactly what their program involves and what they need from you — usually just a form, sometimes with your doctor's confirmation. It costs you a phone call.

Loop in your doctor and equipment supplier

They know your specific equipment and your specific health far better than any guide ever could.

Tell your doctor and your equipment supplier that you're building an outage plan, and ask for their guidance — how many backup tanks or batteries they recommend, whether your settings should ever change on backup power, and what warning signs matter most for your specific situation. This isn't a one-time conversation; bring it up again if your equipment or your health changes.

★ Where my help stops, on purpose

I help with the equipment's power supply — the generator, the battery backup, the safe hookup, testing all of it together. I never weigh in on settings, dosages, or anything medical. That's always your doctor's and your supplier's call, and it should be.

Clean power for sensitive equipment

The kind of power reaching your equipment matters, not just how much of it there is.

An inverter generator produces smoother, more stable power than a conventional one, which many sensitive medical devices handle better. If you're choosing a generator with medical equipment in mind, that's a real point in an inverter's favor. Our inverter guide covers the full comparison, including how conventional generators can still work well when paired with a UPS.

✓ Ask your supplier what your device prefers

Some equipment manuals note a power-quality preference directly. When in doubt, a quick call to your supplier beats guessing.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Where you live shapes how quickly you can lean on each layer of your plan — and how much runway you'll want before you need it.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or a close-in suburb, help tends to be closer: a supplier, a pharmacy, or a hospital is often a short drive, and outages tend to run shorter too.

- Relocating to a relative's home, a hospital, or a shelter is usually a quick trip if it comes to that.
- Shorter, more predictable outages mean your everyday battery backups may cover more of the gap on their own.
- Your equipment supplier is often close by for a quick tank exchange or battery swap.
- Utility crews often reach in-town areas sooner, which still doesn't replace the earlier layers of your plan.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, that same drive can be much longer, and outages often run longer too — which makes the earlier layers of your plan carry more weight.

- Plan for a longer stretch before you could realistically relocate or reach your supplier.
- A well means no running water without power too — worth remembering for basic hygiene around equipment care, alongside your must-run list.
- Keep extra spare batteries and backup tanks on hand, since a supply run is a bigger undertaking than it would be in town.
- A generator with a well-planned fuel reserve carries more of the load here — our fuel-storage and sizing guides can help you plan that piece.

★ Let's talk through your specific setup

Every household's plan looks a little different. Tell me about your equipment, your home, and how far you are from help, and I'll help you think through the power and generator side of it — calmly, and at your pace. Call (330) 200-8042.

A UPS: the bridge while the generator starts

For equipment that can't tolerate even a few seconds without power, this small device matters a great deal.

A UPS — an uninterruptible power supply — is a small battery unit that sits between the wall (or the generator) and your equipment. When the power cuts out, it takes over instantly, giving you the handful of minutes it takes to get a generator started and running smoothly, and it can also smooth out brief interruptions along the way.

✓ Ask your supplier if your equipment needs one

Not every device needs a UPS in front of it, but for anything where even a short gap matters, it's worth asking your supplier or reading the manual directly.

Building your household's written plan

A plan that lives only in your head is a plan that's hard to hand to someone else in a hurry.

- ❑ A list of every device that needs power, and how each one is backed up.
- ❑ The settings your doctor prescribed, written down plainly.
- ❑ Phone numbers for your equipment supplier, your doctor, and your utility.
- ❑ Where backup tanks, spare batteries, and chargers are kept.
- ❑ Basic steps for starting the generator and connecting your equipment to it.
- ❑ Where you'd go, and how you'd get there, if you needed to relocate.

★ I'll help you put it on paper

On a visit, I can help you turn this into a simple written plan — something clear enough that a neighbor or a family member could follow it too, not just you. Call (330) 200-8042.

Know when to call 911

This page exists so you never have to wonder, in the moment, whether it's serious enough to call.

If equipment fails and your backups are running low, or if someone is having trouble breathing, has chest pain, seems confused, or has bluish lips or skin — call 911. Don't wait to see if it passes, and don't feel like you need to be certain first. That's exactly what 911 is there for.

! When in doubt, call

You will never be faulted for calling 911 and having it turn out to be less serious than it seemed. You may deeply regret waiting when it wasn't. Trust that instinct.

Having a place to go

Sometimes the safest plan is leaving, not staying and troubleshooting — and it helps enormously to have decided that in advance.

Think through, ahead of time, where you'd go if power and every backup ran low at once — a relative's home, a hospital, or a designated shelter. Knowing the destination and roughly how you'd get there turns a frightening decision into one you've already made.

- Keep a small bag ready with chargers, spare batteries, medication, and your written plan.
- Share the plan with whoever you'd go to, so it isn't a surprise for them either.
- If you'd need help getting there, decide now who you'd call.

✓ Having the plan is what brings the calm

Most families tell me that simply having this decided in advance — even if they never end up using it — takes a real weight off their mind.

Testing the whole plan before you need it

A plan you've practiced is a plan you can trust when it actually matters.

Pick a calm day and walk through it for real: start the generator, run the equipment on it briefly with everyone comfortable and nothing urgent happening, check how long the UPS actually bridges the gap, and confirm the spare batteries hold their charge. Small gaps show up in a practice run, not in the middle of an actual outage.

★ Let's test it together

I'm glad to be there for this — setting it up, running through it with you, and fixing anything that doesn't work quite right before it matters. Call or text (330) 200-8042 to schedule a visit.

What I help with — and what I don't

Being clear about this boundary is part of doing right by you.

Bill helps with	Always your doctor or supplier's call
Sizing and setting up a generator	Your prescribed settings
Setting up and testing a UPS or battery bridge	Oxygen flow rates or CPAP pressures
Coordinating a licensed electrician for a safe hookup	Medical guidance of any kind
Testing the whole plan with you on a visit	When to seek emergency care

★ **A boundary I take seriously**

I care about your family's safety, which is exactly why I stay firmly on my side of this line. For anything medical, always call your doctor or your equipment supplier first.

A few gentle reminders

These aren't judgments — just the patterns I see most often, offered so you can avoid them.

- Assuming the generator alone is the whole plan, without the tanks and batteries behind it.
- Letting a spare battery or backup tank sit unchecked for months at a time.
- Never having practiced starting the generator, so the first real attempt happens under pressure.
- Not mentioning the plan to your equipment supplier or doctor, who might otherwise catch a gap.
- Putting off the utility's medical-priority registration because it feels like paperwork for another day.

! If one of these sounds familiar, that's all right

Noticing a gap is the whole point of this page. Pick one thing to fix this week, and the plan gets stronger from here.

A caring checklist

Work through this at whatever pace feels right — there's no deadline except the one you set for yourself.

- ☐ I have a manufacturer-approved battery backup or car adapter, charged and ready.
- ☐ If oxygen is involved, I have supplier backup tanks and know how to switch to them.
- ☐ I have spare batteries charged and rotated, if my equipment uses them.
- ☐ I'm registered with my utility's medical or priority list.
- ☐ My doctor and equipment supplier both know my outage plan.
- ☐ I have, or am planning for, a generator — ideally with clean, inverter power.
- ☐ I have a UPS to bridge the gap while the generator starts.
- ☐ I know the signs that mean call 911, and I have somewhere to go if I need to leave.
- ☐ We've actually practiced this plan, not just written it down.

★ Even three checked boxes is progress

You don't have to complete this list today. Every box you check is a real layer of protection added to your plan.

Bringing it all together

A generator is a genuinely valuable piece of a medical-equipment backup plan — as one layer among several, not the whole answer by itself.

Battery backups and car adapters cover the first moments. Supplier-provided tanks and spare batteries need no power at all. Your utility's priority list and a clear plan with your doctor and supplier round out the paperwork side. The generator, ideally with an inverter's clean power and a UPS bridging the startup gap, carries the longer stretch — and a relocation plan is there if you ever need it.

Our inverter guide goes deeper on clean power if you're still choosing a generator, and our outage game-plan guide walks through pulling your whole household's outage plan together, medical equipment and everything else, into one calm picture.

★ Let's build yours together, one piece at a time

There's no need to solve all of this in one sitting. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, and we'll work through it at whatever pace feels right for your family.

Questions worth bringing to the professionals in your life

Some questions belong with your supplier or doctor, not with me — here's how to ask them well.

Q: What should I ask my equipment supplier?

How many backup tanks or spare batteries they recommend for your situation, how to switch to backup calmly, and what their emergency contact process looks like during a widespread outage.

Q: What should I ask my doctor?

Whether your settings should ever change on backup power, what warning signs matter most for your specific condition, and when they want you to call 911 versus their office.

Q: What should I ask an electrician about a safe hookup?

How reliably the setup will start and hold power for sensitive equipment, and how the whole system gets tested before you rely on it.

Q: What should I ask my utility?

How their medical-priority or critical-care registration works, what they need from you, and what it does and doesn't guarantee.

✓ I'm glad to help you prepare the questions

If you're not sure how to bring this up with your doctor or supplier, call me first — I can help you think through what to ask, even though the answers themselves aren't mine to give.

Common Questions

The questions families ask me most often about this, answered as honestly and warmly as I can.

Q: Is a generator alone enough if someone depends on oxygen or a ventilator?

No, and please don't rely on it alone. Backup tanks or batteries that need no power at all, plus a tested plan, matter just as much as the generator itself.

Q: How do I know if our equipment needs an inverter's clean power?

Check the manual, or simply ask your equipment supplier — many sensitive devices do better on it, and a conventional generator paired with a UPS is a reasonable alternative.

Q: We don't have a generator yet — should we wait to build the rest of the plan?

Not at all. Battery backups, supplier tanks, the utility registration, and the written plan all matter on their own and can be built starting today, with the generator added when you're ready.

Q: Can you tell me what oxygen setting or CPAP pressure to use on backup power?

No — that's always your doctor's or your equipment supplier's call, never mine. I can make sure the power reaching the device is safe and reliable; the settings themselves stay with them.

★ However far along you are, I'm glad to help

Whether you're just starting to think about this or fine-tuning a plan you already have, call or text me at (330) 200-8042. We'll take it one calm step at a time.

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 planning for medical equipment in an outage 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.

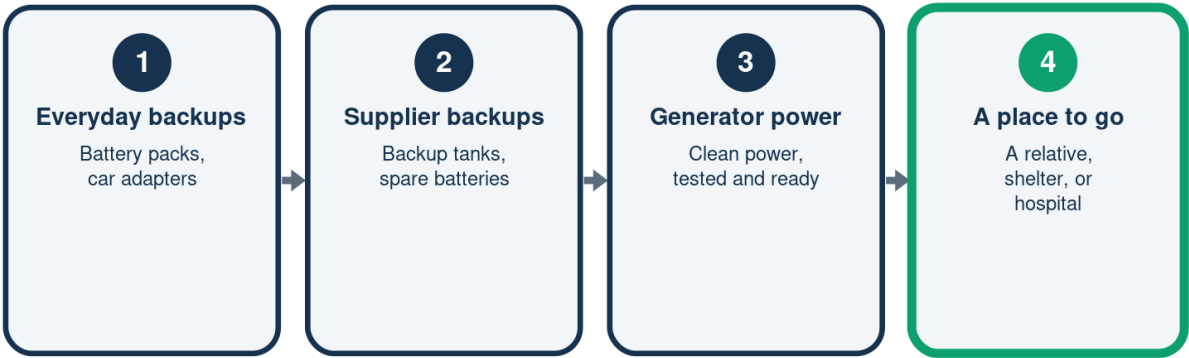
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day,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

Building Your Backup Plan in Four Steps

Layer by layer, calm and complete



Each layer covers for the one before it.

The Layers of a Careful Plan

No single layer has to do the whole job

	What it covers	Who to loop in
Battery backup or car adapter	Short gaps, travel	Equipment supplier
Oxygen backup tanks	No power needed at all	Oxygen supplier
Generator plus a UPS	Longer outages	Bill, an electrician
Utility priority list	Faster attention	Your utility

No single layer has to do the whole job alone.

Clean Power for Sensitive Equipment

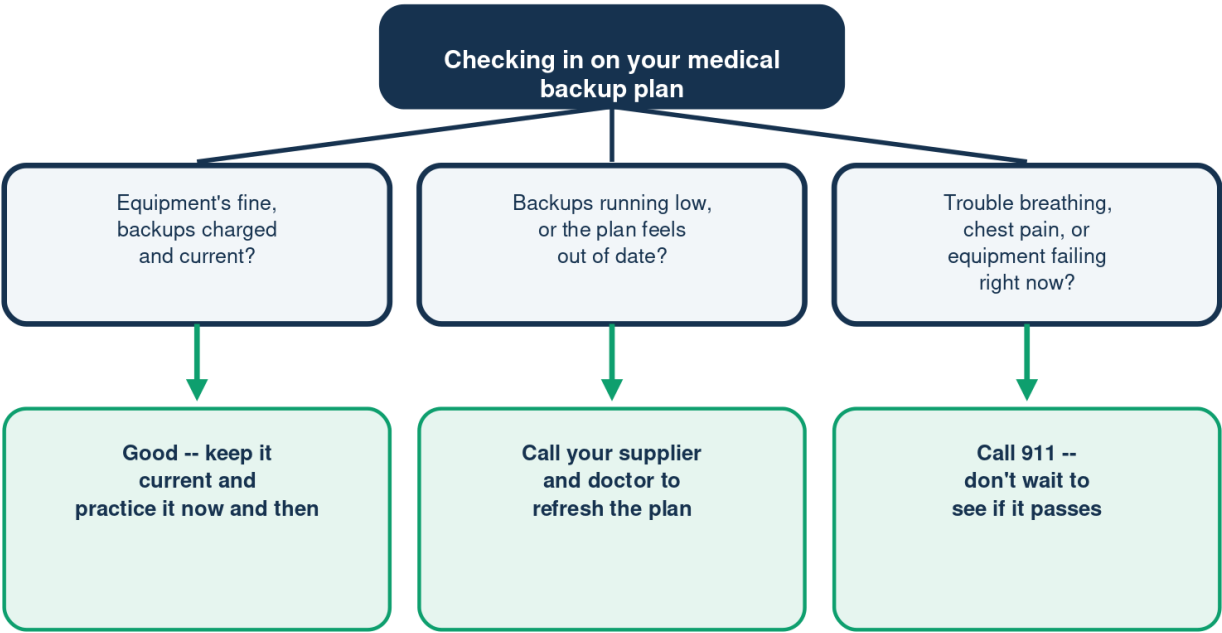
Why the type of power matters for delicate devices

	Inverter (clean power)	Conventional + a UPS
CPAP or BiPAP	Often preferred	Works well with a UPS
Oxygen concentrator	Often preferred	Works well with a UPS
Medication refrigerator	Fine either way	Fine either way

Ask your equipment supplier what your specific device prefers.

What Should You Do Right Now?

A calm gut-check on where your plan stands



This guide isn't medical advice -- always follow your doctor and your equipment supplier.

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



Need a Real Person?

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You just have to remember you can call.
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— Bill

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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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