



An Extended Guide · No. 1856

Giving Video to Police or an Insurer — Exporting Clips the Right Way

Find the clip, export a copy, keep
your original — and hand it off clean

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

BillsHomeTech.com · (330) 200-8042 · Atwater, Ohio

Free & printable — share it with someone who needs it



Book a visit —
billshometech.com/book

! Read this first — it's about people, not just pictures

Before the gear, a word that matters more than any camera: with a business you are recording other people — customers, staff, people walking by — so where you point a camera, and whether it picks up sound, is as important as the picture. As a rule, keep cameras on general work and public areas, never on restrooms, changing areas, or anywhere someone expects privacy, and be very careful about recording audio. This guide gives you plain-English general information, not legal advice. For your own situation — especially anything to do with employees, audio, or the law — check with an attorney who knows Ohio. Here that means handing over only the clip that matters, not the whole recorder, and being mindful of other people who happen to be in the frame.

Giving video the right way, when it matters most

Something happened — a break-in, a fender-bender in the lot, a slip-and-fall, a theft — and now a police officer or an insurance adjuster wants to see your footage. This guide walks you through handing it over calmly and correctly, so your video actually helps and your system keeps running.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. In 30-plus years of helping folks with the technology in their homes and businesses, I've learned that the moment someone asks for video is exactly the moment people panic and do the wrong thing — hand over the whole recorder, or fumble around until the clip is gone.

It doesn't have to be stressful. There's a simple, repeatable way to pull the right clip, keep your original safe, and give a clean copy to whoever needs it. Once you've done it once, you'll never dread it again. Let's walk through it together.

★ Call me before you hand anything over

If an officer or adjuster is asking for footage and you're not sure how to get it off the system, call or text me at (330) 200-8042. I can often walk you through the export right on the phone, or hop on your screen — so you give them exactly what they need and nothing you'll regret.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you'll hand over video the right way every time.

- ❑ Grab the clip promptly — many recorders overwrite the oldest footage, so waiting can erase it.
- ❑ Find the moment by its date and time, on the right camera.
- ❑ EXPORT a copy. Never hand over the whole recorder or its drive.
- ❑ Leave the ORIGINAL on the system untouched; give a COPY.
- ❑ Keep the on-screen date and time in the picture so it's clear when it happened.
- ❑ Give only the relevant clip, and be mindful of bystanders caught in frame.
- ❑ Keep a simple log: what you gave, from which camera, and to whom.

✓ One rule to hold onto

Original stays, copy goes. If you remember nothing else, remember that. The footage on your system is your record; the copy is what you share. Keep them separate and you can't go far wrong.

First thing: grab it before it's gone

The single biggest mistake is waiting. Most recorders are a loop — when they fill up, they record over the oldest footage to make room for the new.

That means the clip you care about has a shelf life. Depending on your system and how many days it keeps, the moment you need could be written over in a few days or a few weeks. If something happened, pull the clip the same day if you possibly can.

You don't have to hand it over right away — you just have to get a copy off the loop and somewhere safe before the recorder reuses that space. Export it, save it to a USB drive or your computer, and then you can take your time with the police or the insurer.

! The clock is running the moment it happens

I've seen folks lose the exact footage they needed because they figured they'd get to it next week. By then the recorder had looped past it. When in doubt, export first and sort out who gets it later — you can always delete a copy you didn't need, but you can't get back one that's been overwritten.

Find the footage by date and time

Before you can export anything, you have to find it. On nearly every system, that means searching by date, by time, and by camera.

Start with what you know: roughly when it happened and which camera would have seen it. Open the recorder's playback or search screen, pick the date, and scrub to the time. Most systems show a timeline you can drag along until you land on the moment.

If you're not sure of the exact minute, give yourself a cushion — start a little before and end a little after. It's better to have a clip that includes a quiet minute on each end than to cut off the very thing that matters. You can always note the key moment for whoever you give it to.

Before you start searching, jot down

- The date it happened, as best you know it.
- The rough time, or a window — 'sometime between 9 and 10'.
- Which camera or cameras would have had a view of it.
- What you're trying to show — the face, the car, the fall, the theft.

✓ Note the time while it's fresh

The moment you realize you'll need footage, write down the date and the approximate time somewhere. An hour later those details get fuzzy, and a vague 'it was Tuesday afternoon, I think' makes finding the clip far harder than it needs to be.

Export a copy — keep the original untouched

This is the heart of doing it right. You make a copy of the clip and hand that over. The original stays right where it is, on your system.

Every proper recorder has an export or backup function. You pick the clip you found, choose export, and it writes a copy to a USB drive you plug in, or lets you download it to a computer or phone. The footage on the recorder's own drive is not moved or deleted — you've simply made a duplicate.

Why does this matter so much? Because your original footage is your record. If a question comes up later — about whether the clip was trimmed, or what happened just before or after — you still have the untouched original to point to. Hand over a copy, and you keep your proof intact.

! Never give anyone your recorder or its hard drive

If someone asks you to hand over the whole recorder or pull the drive out of it, that's a red flag — say you're glad to export the clip they need instead. Giving up the box or the drive takes your cameras offline, hands over everyone else's footage, and loses your own copy. Export, don't surrender the system.

Give the clip, not the whole recorder

A request for 'the video' almost never means everything your cameras ever recorded. It means the few minutes that show what happened.

Export a tight clip around the incident — the minutes before, during, and after. That's what helps an officer or adjuster, and it's all they usually need. Handing over hours of footage, or days of it, just buries the useful part and shares a lot of unrelated comings and goings.

If more than one camera caught the event from different angles, export a clip from each and label which is which. A clear view of the lot plus a close view of the door can tell the whole story where one angle alone leaves doubt.

✓ Trim to the story, with a little breathing room

A good clip starts a minute or two before the action and ends a minute or two after. That shows the lead-up and the aftermath without drowning the point in an hour of nothing. When in doubt, a bit longer is fine — just don't hand over the whole day.

Keep the date and time in the picture

A clip is far more useful when anyone watching can see exactly when it happened. Most systems stamp the date and time right on the video.

That on-screen stamp — the little date and clock usually in a corner — travels with the exported clip, so whoever watches it can see when the event took place without taking your word for it. Make sure it's turned on and showing before you export, and don't crop it out.

This is also why it's worth checking, now and then, that your recorder's clock is actually right. A clip stamped an hour off because the time never got set, or never changed for daylight saving, can muddy an otherwise clear record. We cover keeping the system healthy — clock included — in the maintenance guide.

✓ **Note the camera and the timestamp when you hand it over**

Along with the clip, jot a plain note: which camera it's from, the date, and the time of the key moment — 'Back door camera, March 3rd, about 7:15 p.m.' It takes ten seconds and saves everyone guessing later.

What the export actually is

When you export a clip, you get a file — and it helps to know roughly what kind, so the person you give it to can actually open it.

Many systems export a standard video file that plays on an ordinary computer or phone, the same as any video. Others export the clip along with a small player program — a little piece of software that opens the clip in its own window. Both are fine; they're just two ways makers handle it.

If your system uses its own player, copy that player along with the clip when you hand it over, or the person may not be able to open the file. Some systems also offer a 'standard' or 'common format' export option — if you see that choice, it's often the easiest one to share, because almost anything can play it.

✓ Test that it plays before you hand it off

Before you give a clip to anyone, open the exported copy yourself on a different device — your phone, a home computer. If it plays for you there, it'll likely play for them. If it won't open without the recorder, look for a standard-format export option or copy the little player along with it.

Keep a simple hand-off log

A plain record of what you gave and to whom protects you and keeps things straight. It needn't be fancy — a notebook or a note on your phone does the job.

Each time you hand footage to anyone, write down a few things: the date you gave it, who received it (name and, for an officer, a badge or report number if offered), which camera and what date and time the clip covers, and how you gave it — a USB drive, an email, a download link.

This little log saves you later. If an insurer says they never got the clip, or an officer asks what else you have, you can answer plainly from your notes. It also helps you remember what you've already shared so you're not re-pulling the same footage weeks later.

What to note	Example
Date handed over	March 4th
Who received it	Officer / adjuster name
Camera and time	Back door, Mar 3, 7:15 pm
How you gave it	USB drive / email link

★ I'll help you set up a simple log

If you'd like, I can help you make a tidy little template — on paper or on your phone — so every hand-off gets noted the same way without much thought. Call (330) 200-8042 and we'll keep it simple.

Two kinds of businesses, two sets of needs

Who you are shapes the kind of footage you'll be asked for, and who tends to ask. A busy storefront fields different requests than a quiet office or a warehouse out back.

If you run a customer-facing shop or storefront

You're more likely to be asked about incidents involving the public — a theft, a slip-and-fall, a dispute at the counter, a hit-and-run in the lot. Requests may come from the police, an insurer, or the other person's insurer.

- Pull the clip the same day — busy systems loop quickly.
- Export tight clips of the register, the door, or the lot incident.
- Be mindful of other customers caught in the same frame.
- Keep a log, because you'll field these requests more often.

If you run an office, warehouse, or back-of-house

Your requests more often involve staff, deliveries, inventory, or access to the building — a missing shipment, a damaged vehicle at the dock, a break-in after hours. The stakes can be high and the footage farther back.

- Check how many days you keep — older incidents may already be looping out.
- Export clips from every camera that caught the event, and label them.
- Loop in your attorney early if the matter involves an employee.
- Keep the original untouched; a claim can take months to settle.

★ Not sure what they'll need?

Whether it's the police, your own insurer, or someone else's adjuster, I can help you pull the right clip and hand it over cleanly. Tell me what happened and who's asking, and we'll sort it out. Call (330) 200-8042.

Share only what's relevant — mind the bystanders

Your footage often catches people who have nothing to do with the incident — other customers, passers-by, staff. A little care here is simple courtesy and good sense.

When you trim a clip to the incident, you're naturally cutting out most of the unrelated foot traffic — that's one more reason a tight clip beats handing over hours of video. Share the moment that matters, not a day's worth of everyone who walked by.

You don't need to blur faces or do anything elaborate for a routine police or insurance request — they're used to seeing bystanders in footage. The point is simply to be thoughtful: give what's relevant, keep the rest on your system, and don't go posting incident clips to social media where uninvolved people end up on display.

! Think twice before posting footage publicly

It's tempting to put a clip of a thief or a bad customer online. But public posts can catch innocent bystanders, invite trouble, and sometimes complicate a police matter or a claim. When something's under investigation or headed to a claim, keep the clip between you and the people handling it.

Handing video to the police

When an officer asks for footage, you can be helpful and careful at the same time. Most requests are simple and cooperative.

Find the clip, export a copy to a USB drive or send it the way they ask, keep your original, and note in your log who you gave it to and when. If they offer a report or case number, write it down — it ties your clip to their file and makes any follow-up easier.

If the request is broad — lots of cameras, many days, or footage that involves sensitive matters or your own employees — it's perfectly reasonable to ask what specifically they need and, for anything that gives you pause, to say you'd like to check with your attorney first. A good officer won't mind a business owner being careful with records.

✓ Helpful and careful aren't opposites

You can hand over the clip that shows the break-in today and still say, for a bigger or touchier request, 'let me talk to my attorney and I'll get right back to you.' Being cooperative doesn't mean emptying your whole system on the spot.

Handing video to an insurer

Insurance requests — yours or someone else's — are usually about proving what happened. A clean clip with a clear timestamp does most of the work.

Export the incident clip, keep the on-screen date and time showing, and send it the way the adjuster asks — often an email or an upload link. Note in your log which claim it relates to and when you sent it, so you have a record if the claim drags on, as they sometimes do.

Be a little more cautious with the other party's insurer than with your own. You're not obligated to hand footage to anyone who calls, and for a contested claim it's wise to give the clip to your own insurer or attorney first and let them guide what goes where. When in doubt, slow down and ask.

✓ Keep the original until the claim is closed

Claims can take months. Because your original clip stays on the system — or a saved copy you set aside early — you can always re-send or clarify later. Don't let the recorder loop past an incident that's still an open claim; save a copy somewhere safe the day it happens.

Warrants, subpoenas, and when to call your attorney

Most footage requests are routine. A few are not — and knowing when to pause and get real legal advice is part of handling them well.

Sometimes a request comes with a warrant or a subpoena — a formal legal demand for records. Other times a request just feels sensitive: it involves an employee matter, a lawsuit, or someone's private business. In those situations, the right move isn't to guess — it's to talk to an attorney who can tell you what you must provide and what you shouldn't.

I'm a tech helper, not a lawyer, so I'll always tell you plainly when something is past my lane. I can help you find the clip and make a clean copy; what you're legally required to hand over, and to whom, is a question for your attorney. There's no shame in saying 'let me check and get back to you' before you share anything.

! When a request is formal or sensitive

If you're served with a warrant or subpoena, or a footage request touches an employee, a lawsuit, or anything you're unsure about, talk to your own attorney before handing anything over. They can tell you what the law requires in your specific situation. This is general information, not legal advice; rules change and every situation is different, so confirm the specifics with an attorney who knows Ohio before you rely on it.

Make sure it actually plays for them

The clip that won't open is worse than no clip — it wastes everyone's time and makes you look unhelpful through no fault of your own.

Before you hand anything off, open your exported copy on a device other than the recorder. If your system saved a standard video file, it'll likely play anywhere. If it saved a special file plus a little player program, make sure you include that player, or export again using any 'standard format' option your system offers.

When you put a clip on a USB drive, use a drive you can part with, because the officer or adjuster may keep it. Label the drive plainly with the date and the camera. If you're emailing, a long clip may be too big to send — that's when an upload link or handing over a drive works better.

! Don't assume it'll just open

The most common snag I see is a clip that plays fine on the owner's own recorder screen but won't open on anyone else's computer, because it needs the maker's player. Test it on a plain laptop or phone first. If it won't play there, it won't play for them either.

Storage and overwrite — grab it in time

How many days your system keeps footage decides how long you have to pull a clip. It's worth knowing your own number.

Every recorder holds only so much before it starts recording over the oldest footage. A system set to keep two weeks will have looped past anything older than two weeks. If you don't know how long yours keeps, that's worth finding out before you ever need a clip — it tells you how quickly you must act.

If you often need older footage — say a claim surfaces weeks later — the fix is more storage or a longer retention setting, not scrambling each time. Our storage guide walks through sizing how many days you keep and why it's one of the most important choices in the whole system.

✓ Know your 'days kept' number

Ask yourself, or ask me: how many days back can my system show? Once you know that, you know your deadline to grab any clip — and whether you need more storage so an incident isn't gone before you think to look for it.

A healthy system is there when you need it

None of this matters if the recorder wasn't actually recording. The worst time to discover a problem is the moment you go looking for a clip.

Now and then, check that every camera is still live and recording, that the clock is right, and that the drive is healthy and not throwing errors. A camera knocked askew, a loose cable, or a failed drive can mean the one moment you needed was never captured — and you won't know until it's too late.

A quick habit of glancing at your cameras and playing back a few seconds now and then catches most problems early. We put together a whole maintenance guide on keeping the system reliable, including the clock, the drive, and spotting a camera that's quietly stopped working.

★ Let's make sure it's really recording

If you've never checked that all your cameras are actually capturing and that your clock is right, let's do a quick health check together. It's exactly the kind of thing that's cheap to fix now and painful to discover later. Call (330) 200-8042.

Step by step: exporting a clip

Here's the whole routine, start to finish. Follow it in order and you'll hand over clean footage every time.

- ❑ Write down the date, the time window, and which camera.
- ❑ Open the recorder's playback or search screen.
- ❑ Pick the date and scrub to the moment on the right camera.
- ❑ Set a start a minute or two before and an end a minute or two after.
- ❑ Make sure the on-screen date and time are showing.
- ❑ Choose Export or Backup — never delete or move the original.
- ❑ Save the copy to a USB drive or download it to a computer.
- ❑ Open the copy on another device to be sure it plays.
- ❑ Note it in your log: camera, date, time, who gets it, and how.

✓ Do a practice run before you ever need one

The calmest way to learn this is on a quiet afternoon, not in the middle of an incident. Pick any random minute, export it, and open it on your phone. Once you've done it once with no pressure, the real thing is easy.

Common mistakes people make

A few avoidable slip-ups cause most of the trouble with handing over footage. Now you'll know them in advance.

- **Waiting too long**, so the recorder loops past the clip before you grab it.
- **Handing over the whole recorder or drive** instead of exporting a copy.
- **Giving hours of footage** instead of a tight clip of the incident.
- **Cropping out the date and time**, so no one can tell when it happened.
- **Exporting a file that won't play** on an ordinary computer, without the maker's little player.
- **Keeping no log**, so you can't say later what you gave or to whom.

! The one that costs you most

The mistake that stings the worst is waiting until the footage is gone. Everything else you can fix or redo — but once the recorder has looped past a moment, it's gone for good. Export first, always.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from owners who've been asked for their footage, answered plainly.

Q: Do I have to give the police my footage?

For a routine request you can choose to be helpful and hand over the relevant clip. For anything broad, sensitive, or backed by a warrant or subpoena, it's wise to check with your attorney first. This is general information, not legal advice.

Q: Should I ever give them my actual recorder or hard drive?

No. Export a copy of the clip they need and keep your system and your original. Handing over the box takes your cameras offline and shares everyone else's footage — offer the export instead.

Q: What if the person can't open the clip I sent?

Usually the file needs the maker's little player program, which you forgot to include, or it needs to be exported in a standard format. Re-export using any 'standard' option, or send the player along with the clip. Always test it on another device first.

Q: How long do I have before the footage is gone?

As long as your system keeps footage before it records over the oldest — maybe days, maybe weeks. Find out your 'days kept' number, and when in doubt, grab the clip the same day. Our storage guide covers this.

Q: Can I just delete footage I don't want anyone to see?

Be very careful here. Deleting footage that relates to an incident, a claim, or an investigation can cause you real trouble. If a matter is live, leave the footage alone and talk to your attorney before deleting anything.

★ Still unsure how to hand it over?

This is exactly the kind of thing I'm glad to walk you through, calmly and without jargon. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll get the right clip to the right person the right way.

A hand-off checklist

Keep this by the recorder. Run down it each time someone asks for footage, and you'll never fumble the hand-off.

- ☐ I grabbed a copy promptly, before the recorder could loop past it.
- ☐ I found the right moment on the right camera, by date and time.
- ☐ I exported a COPY and left the ORIGINAL untouched on the system.
- ☐ I trimmed it to the incident, with a little room on each end.
- ☐ The on-screen date and time are showing in the clip.
- ☐ I tested the copy on another device and it plays.
- ☐ I included the maker's player, or used a standard-format export.
- ☐ I noted it in my log: camera, date, time, who got it, and how.
- ☐ For anything formal or sensitive, I checked with my attorney first.

✓ Save a copy for yourself, too

Even after you hand a clip to the police or an insurer, keep your own copy set aside — separate from the recorder that will eventually loop past it. If the matter comes back months later, you'll be glad you did.

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 giving your video to the police or an insurer feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it with your other business papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything — that's what the guide is for.

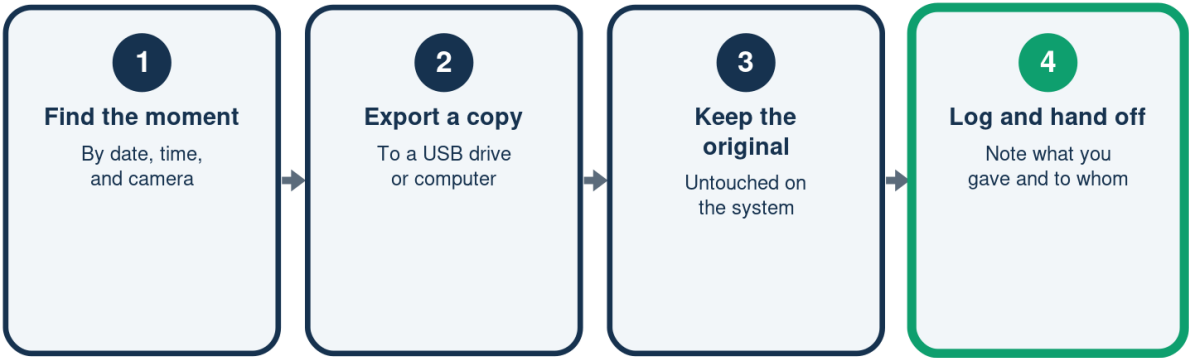
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your place of business, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I'm a tech helper, not a licensed electrician or low-voltage contractor — for in-wall wiring or panel work I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro and make sure it all works together.

★ 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

Exporting a Clip the Right Way

The calm routine that works every time



Original stays, copy goes -- that's the whole idea.

Give a Copy, Not the Recorder

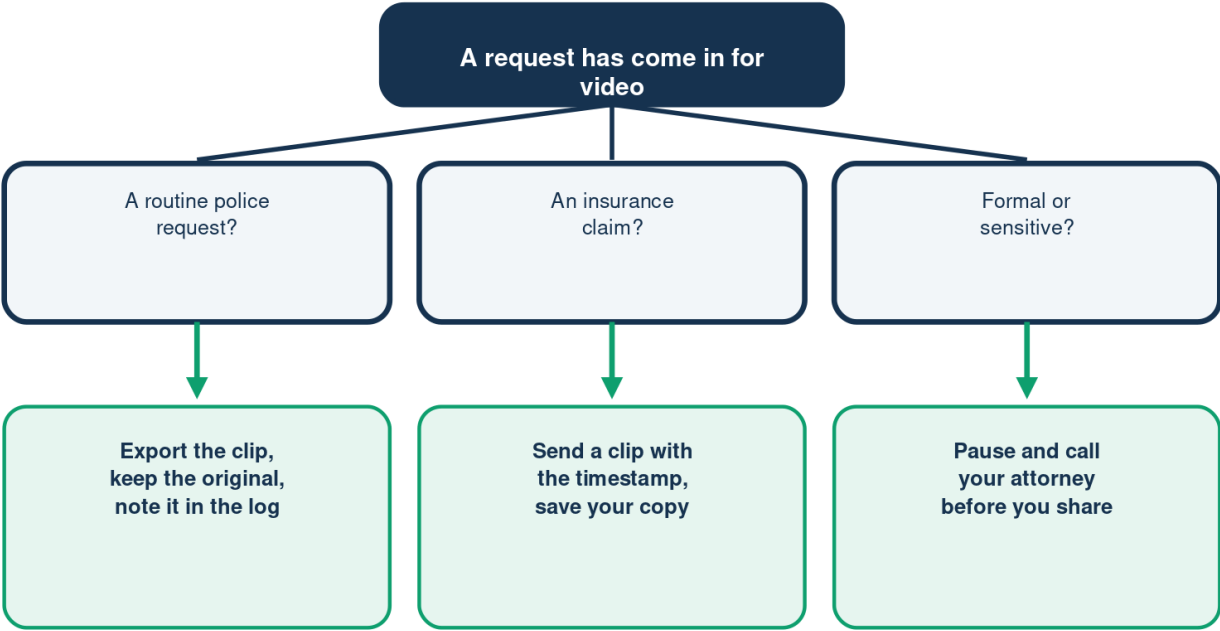
What to hand over, and what to keep

	Hand over	Keep
The footage	A trimmed clip	The original
The hardware	Nothing	Recorder & drive
How much	Just the event	Everything else
The record	A copy	Your log

Never surrender the box or the drive -- export the clip.

Who's Asking for Footage?

Helpful and careful at the same time



A warrant, subpoena, or employee matter is a lawyer question, not a guess.

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

What to Include with a Clip

A clean hand-off every time

	Why it matters	Quick check
Date & time on screen	Shows when	Not cropped out
Which camera	Shows where	Labeled
A player if needed	So it opens	Tested elsewhere
Your log entry	Your record	Who and when

Test that it plays on another device before you hand it over.



Need a Real Person?

You do not have to figure this out alone.

You just have to remember you can call.

Friendly, plain-English 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.

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

Bill@BillsHomeTech.com · Mon–Sat 9:00 AM – 7:30 PM

— 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*



Book a visit —
billshometech.com/book

Use of these guides is subject to our Terms of Use (billshometech.com/terms-of-use).

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

Bill@BillsHomeTech.com · Mon–Sat 9:00 AM – 7:30 PM

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech