



An Extended Guide · No. 1563

Choosing a Ground-Mount Installer

How to find someone good — and
avoid the high-pressure types

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 — two honest truths about ground-mount solar

Two honest truths before we start, because they surprise a lot of good folks. First, a ground-mounted solar array is a professional job. It takes a licensed installer, real foundation work in your yard, building and electrical permits, and your utility's approval to connect (that approval is called interconnection). This guide is here to help you understand, plan for, and evaluate a ground mount; it is not a do-it-yourself project, and I never want you digging footings, wiring an array, or opening an electrical panel. Second, a plain grid-tied solar system — roof or ground, without a battery — shuts itself off during a power outage, even in bright sunshine. That is a required safety feature, so the system cannot put electricity onto the lines while the crews are repairing them. If keeping the lights on during an outage matters to you, you will need a battery, and we will talk about that plainly. For a ground mount, the installer you choose is really the whole ballgame — they design the foundations, pull the permits, and line up your utility's approval, so picking a good one matters more than any single piece of equipment.

Finding someone good to build it

A ground-mounted solar array is a real construction project in your yard, and the person you hire to do it makes all the difference. Let's talk, in plain terms, about how to find someone trustworthy — and how to gently spot the folks you'd do better to send on their way.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. For 30-plus years I've helped folks make sense of the gear and the big-ticket decisions in their homes, patiently and without any sales pitch. I don't sell solar and I don't earn a nickel from any installer, so the advice in here is just honest advice.

Choosing an installer isn't about finding the flashiest ad or the lowest number on a page. It's about finding a licensed, experienced local pro who does ground mounts well, explains things clearly, and treats you with respect. This guide walks you through exactly what to look for.

★ Want a second set of eyes on a quote?

That's one of my favorite ways to help. Send me an installer's proposal and I'll help you read it, spot what's missing, and think up good questions — with nothing to sell you either way. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

Choosing an installer, on one page

If you read nothing else, read this. Here's the heart of it in a handful of plain points.

- ❑ Hire licensed, insured, and bonded — and ask to see proof.
- ❑ Look for a real local track record with ground mounts, not just roofs.
- ❑ Ask for references and, if you can, go see a finished array.
- ❑ Insist on a clear written proposal — never a handshake and a verbal price.
- ❑ Make sure they handle both the permits and the utility interconnection.
- ❑ Get a few quotes so you can compare fairly, apples to apples.
- ❑ Beware high-pressure sales, door-knockers, and deals too good to be true.

✓ Good installers are patient

The best pros I've seen are calm, clear, and happy to let you think it over. If someone is rushing you toward a signature today, that alone tells you a great deal about how the rest of the job would go.

Why a ground mount is a different search

Plenty of companies put panels on roofs. Fewer are truly at home building a structure in your yard — and that difference matters.

A ground mount adds work a roof job doesn't have: foundations set in the soil, a frame engineered for our wind and snow, a trench carrying the wiring back to the house, and setbacks from your property lines. You want someone who has done all of that many times, not someone who mostly does roofs and would be learning on your project.

That's why 'have you built ground mounts around here?' is one of the very first questions to ask. A pro who knows the local soil, the frost depth your building department requires, and your township's rules will save you headaches a roof-only crew might stumble into.

✓ Ask about ground mounts specifically

Don't just ask whether a company does solar — ask how many ground mounts they've built nearby, and whether you can see one. The answer separates the seasoned from the merely willing.

Licensed, insured, and bonded

These three words aren't red tape — they're the protection that keeps a problem from becoming your problem. Ask for proof of all three.

Licensed means the electrical work is done by, or under, a properly licensed electrician who answers to the state and follows the code. Insured means the company carries liability and workers' coverage, so if something is damaged or someone is hurt in your yard, their insurance handles it, not you. Bonded adds another layer that helps protect you if the work is left unfinished.

A reputable installer will hand over this proof without blinking — it's a normal, everyday request. If anyone gets cagey or annoyed when you ask, take that as your answer and move along.

! Never accept unlicensed electrical work

The wiring, the disconnects, and the utility connection must be done by a licensed pro to code, then inspected. This is not a corner to cut to save money — an improper connection is a fire and shock risk, and it can void insurance. Licensed and inspected, always.

Training and certification

Beyond the basic license, there's a mark of extra training that's worth knowing about, and worth asking after.

You may see the letters NABCEP — that's a respected, independent certification for solar professionals. A crew that holds it has gone out of its way to prove real expertise. It isn't the only sign of quality, and a fine installer might not have it, but it's a genuine plus and a fair thing to ask about.

More broadly, you want a settled, experienced crew rather than a rotating cast of subcontractors nobody can vouch for. Ask who will actually be in your yard doing the work, and whether they're employees or hired hands brought on for the day.

✓ **Certification is a plus, not the whole story**

Weigh certification alongside local experience, references, and how clearly they explain things. A certified crew with a long local track record and happy neighbors is the sweet spot.

A real, local track record

Experience you can point to beats a glossy brochure every time. You want someone who has done this work, near here, and stuck around.

Ask how long the company has been in business and how many ground mounts they've built in our part of Ohio. A local outfit knows the soil, the frost line your building department sets, the townships, and the utilities. They're also easy to reach if something needs attention a few years down the road.

A company that shows up from far away, signs everyone up fast, and moves on is a harder bet — especially if you ever need warranty help. Roots in the community are worth real money when it comes to standing behind the work.

✓ Will they still be here in ten years?

A warranty is only as good as the company behind it. An established local installer who plans to be around is far more reassuring than a name you've never heard that blew into town last month.

References and installs you can see

Nothing settles the nerves like seeing real work and hearing from real neighbors. A good installer is proud to show you both.

Ask for a few references — ideally folks with ground mounts, not just roof jobs — and actually call them. Ask how the crew handled the yard, whether they cleaned up, whether the work passed inspection smoothly, and whether the system has run trouble-free since. Ask if anything went sideways, and how the company made it right.

If you can, go look at a finished array in person. It tells you a lot about the tidiness of the wiring, the neatness of the frame, and the pride the crew takes in their work. Photos are fine; seeing one standing in a yard is better.

✓ Ask the neighbor the real question

The most useful thing to ask a reference is simple: 'Would you hire them again?' The pause before the answer often tells you as much as the words that follow it.

Beware the high-pressure sell

Solar has drawn its share of pushy sales outfits. A little healthy caution here protects your wallet and your peace of mind.

Be wary of anyone who knocks on your door uninvited, quotes a 'today only' price, pushes you to sign on the spot, or leans on scare tactics and rush. Honest installers know a solar array is a big, long-term decision, and they're glad to give you time and space to think it over and talk it through with family.

Be just as wary of a deal that seems far too good to be true. A price well below everyone else's usually means corners will be cut somewhere — in the equipment, the foundation, the permits, or the crew. You want fair and solid, not suspiciously cheap.

! Slow down when someone speeds you up

The pressure to 'sign today' is a bright red flag. Never sign a contract or hand over a large deposit on a first visit. A real professional will still honor a fair price next week — so take the week if you want it.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Finding the right installer looks a little different depending on whether you're on a tidy town lot or out on acreage — so aim your search accordingly.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, you'll usually have more installers within easy reach, and references may be right around the corner. The wrinkle is that town lots bring HOA rules and tighter setbacks into play.

- More local installers to compare — use that to get a few quotes.
- Ask whether they've worked within your township's and HOA's rules.
- References may be nearby — ask to see a ground mount in your area.
- A smaller yard array still deserves the same licensed, permitted care.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, the array is bigger and farther from the house, and not every company will travel to acreage or knows rural well-and-septic properties. You want someone comfortable with a real ground-mount build.

- Confirm they'll travel to your property and have done rural jobs.
- Ask about longer trench runs and siting near a barn or well-house.
- Make sure they know the agricultural and floodplain rules that may apply.
- A pro who knows wells can plan for backup that keeps your pump running.

★ Not sure who serves your area?

Tell me where you are in Portage County and what you're hoping for, and I'll help you think through who to call and what to ask. Nothing to sell, just a hand. Call (330) 200-8042.

Get a few quotes and compare fairly

One quote tells you a price. A few quotes tell you whether that price is fair and what a good plan really looks like.

Reach out to a few installers and ask each for a written proposal for the same job. Comparing them side by side shows you the honest middle of the market and flags anything that's oddly high or suspiciously low. It also lets you see who explains things clearly and who leaves you guessing.

Try to compare apples to apples. Make sure each quote covers the same scope — the structure, the wiring run, the permits, the interconnection, and the cleanup — so you're not fooled by a low number that quietly leaves things out. Our cost-versus-roof guide talks more about weighing a quote honestly.

✓ Cheapest isn't the goal; fair-and-solid is

Don't simply pick the lowest number. Weigh the price against the experience, the references, the warranty, and how comfortable you feel with the people. The right choice is usually somewhere sensible, not at the bottom.

What a good written proposal spells out

A clear proposal is a sign of a clear operator. Vague quotes lead to vague results — and surprise charges.

A solid written proposal lays out the scope in plain terms: where the array will sit, roughly what it's expected to produce, the foundation and racking approach, the wiring run, who pulls the permits, who handles the utility interconnection, the timeline, the warranties, and exactly what is and isn't included.

You don't need to understand every technical line. You do want to see that it's thorough, in writing, and specific to your property. A one-line price scrawled on a business card is not a proposal — it's a warning.

A good proposal includes	Why it matters
Scope and site plan	You know what you're buying
Permits and inspection	Confirms it's done legally
Interconnection	The utility approval is handled
Warranties	Spells out who covers what
Timeline and payment	No surprises later

Make sure they handle the paperwork

Two separate approvals stand between you and a working system, and your installer should shoulder both. Confirm it before you sign.

First are the building and electrical permits from your township or county, plus the inspection that follows. Second, and entirely separate, is the utility's interconnection — their formal approval to connect your array to the grid, along with any meter change. A good installer manages the whole dance and keeps you informed.

If a company suggests skipping permits to save time or money, that's a hard no. Unpermitted work can cause trouble with inspections, your insurance, and the sale of your home down the road. Our permits-and-setbacks guide and our interconnection guide walk through each in full.

! 'We can skip the permit' means walk away

Any installer who offers to skip permits or the inspection is telling you they cut corners. Permits and inspections exist to keep the work safe and legal. A pro pulls them as a matter of course — no shortcuts.

Warranties, and who honors them

A warranty is a promise, and promises are only as good as the people making them. Know what's covered and who you'd actually call.

There are usually a few different warranties in play: one on the panels, one on the inverter, and one on the installer's own workmanship — the frame, the foundation, and the wiring they did. Ask how long each lasts and, most importantly, who you call if there's a problem in a few years.

The workmanship warranty is where the installer's staying power really counts. A long paper warranty means little if the company has vanished. This is another reason an established local pro is worth so much — they're still here to make it right.

✓ Ask: who do I call, and will you pick up?

Get clear on the service path before you sign. Do you call the installer, or chase the equipment maker yourself? A local company that answers its own phone years later is worth a great deal.

Green flags and red flags, side by side

A quick gut-check you can keep by the phone. Lean toward the left column; be cautious of the right.

Green flag	Red flag
Shows proof of license	Dodges the question
Built ground mounts locally	Only ever does roofs
Patient, clear, no rush	Pushy, 'sign today'
Detailed written proposal	Vague verbal price
Handles permits and utility	Offers to skip them
Fair, in-line price	Too good to be true

No single flag settles it, but the pattern usually does. When the green column stacks up, you're likely in good hands. When the red column does, trust that feeling and keep looking.

Questions worth asking out loud

Bring these to any installer. How they answer tells you as much as what they answer.

- How many ground mounts have you built near here, and may I see one?
- Are you licensed, insured, and bonded — and may I see proof?
- Who will actually be doing the work in my yard?
- Do you pull the permits and handle the utility interconnection?
- What warranties come with this, and who do I call for service?
- What's your timeline, and what could delay it?
- Can you give me this proposal, and these answers, in writing?

✓ Watch for plain, patient answers

You're not testing them to be difficult — you're listening for someone who explains things calmly and honestly. A good installer welcomes these questions; a poor one gets prickly. That contrast is the whole point.

Before you sign anything

Once you've found your installer, a few careful minutes with the contract protects you for years. Read it all, and don't be shy.

Make sure everything you were promised is written into the contract: the scope, the price, the timeline, the warranties, and what happens if plans change. Look at the payment schedule, too — a fair one ties payments to progress and never asks for the whole amount, or a huge deposit, up front.

If a term is unclear, ask for it to be explained or spelled out before you sign, not after. There's no rush and no silly question. A trustworthy installer wants you to understand exactly what you're agreeing to.

! Never pay in full up front

Be very cautious of anyone who wants the entire cost, or an unusually large deposit, before work begins. A fair schedule pays as the job hits milestones. Paying it all up front leaves you with little leverage if something goes wrong.

Financing and incentives — ask, but verify

Money questions matter, but they're exactly where you want careful, verified answers rather than a salesperson's rosy promises.

Installers often present financing options and mention tax credits or other incentives. Those can be real and helpful — but the details change, and they depend on your own situation. Don't take the sales pitch as gospel. Confirm any tax benefit with a tax professional, and verify incentive terms yourself before you count on them.

I won't put numbers or payback math in here, because honest figures come only from a real quote and your own circumstances — not from a guide or a pitch. Let the installer lay out the options in writing, then check the parts that affect your taxes and your budget with the right professional.

! Be careful with financing paperwork

Solar financing sometimes comes bundled with liens or long contracts. Read every financing document as carefully as the install contract, and if anything is confusing, have someone you trust look it over before you sign. Never let a salesperson rush you through it.

Where I fit in — your coordinator

I'm not a solar installer, and I don't want to be. What I am is a patient guide who's on your side, with nothing to sell.

I don't sell solar equipment and I earn no commission from any installer, so I've no reason to steer you anywhere but the right direction. What I can do is sit with you, help you read the proposals, explain the parts that feel like a foreign language, and help you line up questions for the folks who will do the licensed work.

Think of me as the neighbor who's been around this block before — there to make sure you understand what you're signing and never feel talked into anything. The building, the wiring, and the utility hookup stay with the licensed pros; the understanding and the confidence are what I help with.

★ A friendly hand, not a sales pitch

If it would help to have someone in your corner while you choose, that's exactly what I do. A first visit is a flat \$99, and I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

Take your time — the right pro won't rush you

This is a decision to make calmly, on your own schedule. Give yourself full permission to go slow.

There's no prize for deciding fast. Sleep on the quotes. Talk them over with your spouse, your kids, or a friend whose judgment you trust. Ask the same question twice if you want to. A good installer expects all of this and respects it — their price and their patience will both still be there next week.

If at any point you feel pushed, uneasy, or confused, that feeling is information. It's perfectly fine to say 'I need more time' and to walk away from anyone who won't give it to you. The right choice will feel steady, not rushed.

✓ Trust the calm feeling

When you've found the right installer, the decision tends to feel settled rather than pressured. If you're still uneasy after your homework, that's a fine reason to keep looking. Your gut is often right.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about choosing a solar installer.

Q: How many quotes should I get?

A few, so you can compare fairly and get a feel for the honest middle of the market. One quote leaves you with nothing to weigh it against; a few let you spot anything oddly high or suspiciously low.

Q: A company knocked on my door with a great deal. Should I bite?

I'd be cautious. Uninvited door-knocking and 'today only' pricing are classic high-pressure tactics. Take their card, do your own homework, get other quotes, and never sign on the spot.

Q: Does the cheapest quote win?

Not on its own. The lowest number sometimes means corners will be cut. Weigh price against experience, references, warranties, and how comfortable you feel. Fair-and-solid beats cheap-and-risky.

Q: Do I really need someone who's done ground mounts specifically?

Yes, ideally. A ground mount involves foundations, a trench, and setbacks a roof job doesn't. Someone who's done many locally will handle it far more smoothly than a roof-only crew learning as they go.

★ Still not sure who to trust?

That's a great reason to call me. I'll help you sort the honest pros from the pushy ones, with no dog in the fight. Call or text (330) 200-8042 and we'll talk it through.

Your simple game plan for choosing

Pull it all together into a calm, orderly path. Work down this list and you'll choose with confidence.

- ❑ Make a short list of a few licensed local installers who do ground mounts.
- ❑ Ask each for a written proposal covering the very same job.
- ❑ Check licenses, insurance, references, and a real install if you can.
- ❑ Confirm they handle both the permits and the utility interconnection.
- ❑ Compare the proposals fairly, and weigh price against everything else.
- ❑ Read the contract closely and never pay it all up front.
- ❑ Take your time — and lean on me if a second opinion would help.

✓ One steady step at a time

You don't have to do this all in a day. Tackle one line at a time, and the whole thing turns from daunting into doable. That's how every good decision gets made.

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 choosing a good ground-mount solar installer 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 sell solar and I don't do the licensed electrical work or the install itself — I help you understand it all, ask the right questions, and line up a trustworthy local solar installer, so you never feel talked into anything.

★ 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

Green Flags vs Red Flags

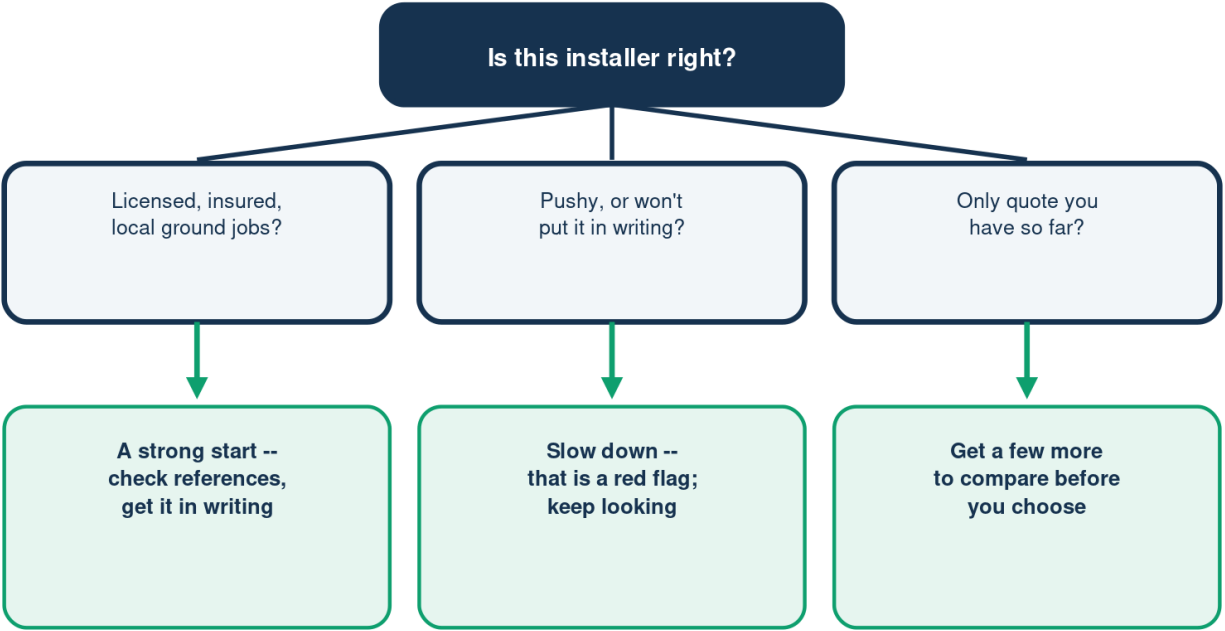
Lean toward the left; be cautious of the right

	Green flag	Red flag
Licensing	Shown proudly	Dodges it
Track record	Ground jobs too	Roofs only
Sales style	Patient	Pushy, rushed
Proposal	In writing	Vague, verbal
Permits	Handles them	Skips them

No one flag settles it -- but the pattern usually does.

Is This Installer Right?

A quick gut-check before you commit



A good installer never pressures you to sign today.

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

Questions Worth Asking

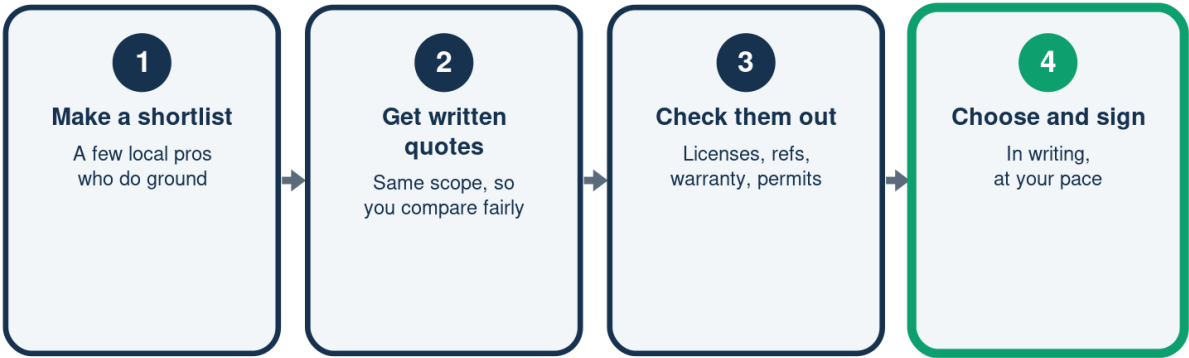
What to ask, and the answer you want to hear

	Ask this	Good sign
Experience	Ground before?	Many, locally
Permits	Who pulls them?	We do
Utility	Gets approval?	We handle it
Warranty	Who honors it?	Named, local
References	Can I see one?	Yes, nearby

How they answer tells you as much as what they answer.

From Quotes to Signed

A calm path to the right choice



Never sign or pay a big deposit on a first visit.



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.

(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