



An Extended Guide · No. 1398

Standalone Battery Backup (No Solar Needed)

A grid-charged battery
as quiet, simple backup

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

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! Read this first — this is a licensed electrician's job

A whole-home battery ties into your home's main electrical panel, and that makes the installation real electrical work — a job for a licensed electrician, done with a permit, and often with your utility's approval before it is switched on. It is not a do-it-yourself project. The happy news, and one of a battery's real advantages, is that once it is installed it runs silently and gives off no exhaust and no carbon monoxide, so unlike a generator it is safe indoors or in the garage. But the battery still stores a great deal of energy, so leave the wiring, the mounting, and any service to the pros, and follow the installer's and maker's instructions. I help you plan it and line up a trustworthy licensed electrician — I do not do the wiring myself. You don't need a single solar panel for any of this — but a grid-charged battery still ties into your main panel, so a licensed electrician and a permit are just as much a part of a solar-free setup.

You don't need solar to have a home battery

A lot of folks assume a home battery only makes sense if you've got solar panels on the roof. Happily, that's not true. Many batteries charge straight from the grid and make wonderful, quiet, hands-off backup all on their own — and this guide explains exactly how, in plain English.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent 30+ years helping folks make sense of home equipment without the jargon and without the rush. Think of this as the two of us at your kitchen table, sorting out whether a solar-free battery is right for you.

I don't sell batteries and I earn no commission, so this is just honest advice. We'll cover how a grid-charged battery works, when going solar-free is the smart move, the one honest catch to plan around, and how you can always add solar later if you'd like.

★ There's nothing to sell you here

If you'd like a hand deciding whether a standalone battery fits your home, call or text me at (330) 200-8042. I'll talk it through honestly — free, and with no sales pitch.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you already understand a standalone, grid-charged battery.

- ❑ You do not need solar to have a home battery. Many charge straight from the grid and act as quiet, hands-off backup.
- ❑ A standalone battery keeps itself topped up from the grid, then carries your home silently and instantly when the power fails.
- ❑ It makes good sense when you're not ready for solar, have a shaded or north-facing roof, are watching the budget, or simply want backup.
- ❑ The honest catch: with no solar, during an outage it can't refill until the grid comes back — so you plan around the outages you actually get.
- ❑ Keeping the backup list to essentials makes a finite charge stretch much further through an outage.
- ❑ You can usually add solar later, and it still ties into your main panel, so it's a licensed electrician's job with a permit.

✓ The one-sentence version

A grid-charged battery is quiet, simple backup with no solar required — just remember it can't refill mid-outage, so size it to the outages you face.

Good news: you don't need solar

Let's put the biggest worry to rest right at the start, because it keeps a lot of folks from considering a battery at all.

Somewhere along the way, batteries and solar got glued together in people's minds, as though you can't have one without the other. You absolutely can. A home battery is perfectly happy charging from the grid, with no panels anywhere in the picture.

In that setup, the battery simply keeps itself full from ordinary grid power, waits quietly in the background, and takes over the instant the power fails. It's silent, it's instant, and it's safe indoors — all the things folks love about a battery — with none of the roof, sun, or panel questions.

✓ Solar is a partner, not a requirement

Think of solar as one optional partner for a battery, not a prerequisite. Plenty of homes get exactly the backup they want from a grid-charged battery alone — and never install a single panel.

How a grid-charged battery works

The idea couldn't be simpler, so let's picture it plainly from fill to finish.

When the grid is on, the battery quietly draws a little ordinary power to keep itself charged — topping up in the background whenever it has room, much like your phone on its charger overnight. You never have to think about it; it just stays ready and waiting.

When the power fails, it flips the script: the battery releases its stored energy to run your home, switching over so fast the clocks don't blink. When the grid returns, it recharges from that restored power, quickly and on its own, ready for the next time. That's the whole rhythm.

✓ A reservoir that fills from the tap

Picture a reservoir that fills straight from your home's power when the grid is on, and pours back out when the grid is off. No sun needed for any of it — just the grid to fill it and an outage to call on it.

When going solar-free makes good sense

A standalone battery isn't a compromise — for plenty of homes it's simply the right call. Here's when it fits.

- **You're not ready for solar:** maybe you want backup now and will think about panels another year. A battery gives you that today.
- **Your roof isn't ideal for solar:** heavy shade, a north-facing slope, or a small or complicated roof can make panels a poor payoff.
- **You're watching the budget:** a grid-charged battery skips the cost of panels and their gear, so it can be a smaller first step.
- **You just want backup:** if silent, instant, hands-off outage power is the whole goal, solar may be more than you need.
- **You want to keep it simple:** fewer moving parts and no roof work can mean a tidier install and less to think about.

✓ Right tool, not a lesser one

Choosing a grid-charged battery isn't settling. For a home that mainly wants quiet, dependable backup, it can be exactly the right amount of system — no more, no less.

The one honest catch

There's a single trade-off to understand clearly, and it's the whole reason a solar-free battery needs a little planning.

With no solar, the only thing that refills your battery is the grid. So during an outage, once the battery is spent, it simply can't recharge until the power comes back. There's no sun quietly topping it up by day — it's a reservoir with no stream feeding it while the grid is down.

That's not a flaw; it's just the nature of a grid-charged battery, and it's easy to plan around. It mainly means you size the battery, and your backup list, to the outages you actually get — not to the worst storm imaginable.

! It can't refill until the grid returns

This is the honest limit to hold on to: a grid-charged battery gives you a fixed, quiet reserve, and when it's used up it waits for the power to return to refill. For long, multi-day outages, that's the thing to plan for — our multi-day-outage guide covers stretching a battery when the wait drags on.

Planning around the outages you actually get

Because a standalone battery can't refill mid-outage, a little planning turns its finite charge into a genuinely reassuring cushion.

Start by thinking honestly about your outages. Are they usually a flicker and an hour, or do you lose power for a day or more once a season? Short, common outages are exactly what a grid-charged battery handles beautifully. For those, it may be all the backup you ever want.

The lighter the load you ask it to carry, the further it stretches. Keeping the backup list to essentials — fridge, some lights, the internet, a medical device — rather than the whole house is what makes a fixed charge last through the outages you're likely to see.

✓ Match the battery to your real outages

The right size isn't 'as big as possible' — it's 'enough for the outages you actually face, running the things you truly need.' That's a load calculation for a qualified installer, and I'll help you know what to ask.

What a standalone battery is great at

For the right home, a grid-charged battery is a lovely, low-fuss thing to own. Here's where it shines.

- **Short, common outages:** the flicker, the hour-long blip — covered so smoothly you barely notice anything happened.
- **Silent, instant switchover:** no engine, no delay, gentle on sensitive electronics, and safe indoors with no fumes.
- **Quiet, day or night:** nothing to wake the house or bother a neighbor, which is a real gift at three in the morning.
- **Hands-off living:** it charges, waits, and switches over on its own; there's no fuel, no oil, and no pull-cord.
- **Everyday value:** many batteries can help trim your regular bill by shifting when you draw power — more on that next.

✓ Low fuss is the whole appeal

A grid-charged battery asks almost nothing of you once it's in. For folks who want dependable backup without a project to manage, that quiet simplicity is exactly the draw.

Everyday value, even without solar

A battery earns its keep beyond outages, too — and this works with no solar at all, which surprises a lot of folks.

Even on a grid-only setup, a battery can shift when your home draws its power. Where your utility charges different rates at different times of day, the battery can quietly charge when power is cheaper or plentiful and lean on that stored energy when it's dearer. It's a gentle, automatic way to smooth out the everyday bill.

Whether that helps, and by how much, depends entirely on your utility's rate plan, so I won't promise numbers. But it's worth knowing that a standalone battery isn't only a rainy-day tool — it can do a little quiet good on ordinary days as well.

✓ Ask your utility about time-of-use rates

Whether shifting power saves you anything depends on your rate plan, which varies by utility and changes over time. Your installer and your utility are the ones to confirm what a battery could do for your everyday bill.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

A grid-charged battery suits a close-in home with short outages a little differently than a rural home that can lose power for days — and a private well is the deciding detail.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, outages tend to be shorter, city water keeps flowing no matter what, and the grid usually returns before long. That's an ideal setting for a simple, solar-free battery.

- Short, common outages are exactly what a grid-charged battery covers best — and the grid is usually back to refill it soon.
- City water means backup is about food, warmth, and comfort — essentials a battery can carry for a good stretch.
- Silent operation keeps the peace with close neighbors, day or night.
- No roof or sun questions to sort out — it charges from the grid you already have.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, outages run longer and your well pump stops the instant the power does — no electricity means no water for drinking, cooking, flushing, or animals. A battery that can't refill mid-outage needs careful thought here.

- A 240-volt well pump draws a heavy jolt to start; a battery alone may not restart it without enough inverter surge, and it drains fast — one for the installer to size.
- Because a solar-free battery can't refill until the grid returns, a long rural outage can outrun it — so many country homes add a generator for the endurance.
- Store drinking water regardless; when the well is down, stored water is your bridge until the power comes back.
- A standalone battery still earns its place running essentials gently and bridging the silent seconds before a generator starts.

★ Not sure which camp you're in?

Whether you're on city water or a well, and how long your outages usually last, changes what a solar-free battery can do for you. Tell me about it and I'll help you picture it. Call (330) 200-8042.

Essentials, or the whole home?

With a standalone battery, this choice matters even more, because how much you back up decides how long a fixed charge lasts.

The common, budget-friendly choice is to back up a handful of essential circuits — the fridge, some lights, the internet, a furnace's controls, a medical device — on a small backup panel. Keeping the list short lets a grid-charged battery stretch nicely through the outages you're likely to face.

You can back up the whole home instead, but that takes more battery and careful design so heavy loads don't all switch on at once and drain it in a hurry. Central air, an electric range, a well pump — those are where a standalone battery empties fast, which is why sizing belongs to a professional. Our whole-home vs essential-loads guide walks through it.

✓ Start with your must-run list

Jot down what you'd truly want running in an outage. That short list points straight at how much battery you need — and with a solar-free setup, a sensible list is what keeps a finite charge feeling generous.

You can always add solar later

Going solar-free today doesn't close the door on solar tomorrow. A standalone battery can be a fine first step.

If you think you might want panels down the road, tell your installer now. Many batteries and inverters can be chosen to be solar-ready, so that adding panels later is a straightforward addition rather than a start-over. You get quiet backup today and an easy path to solar when you're ready.

And once solar is added, the picture changes in the nicest way: the battery you already have can then be refilled by the sun during a daytime outage, not just by the grid. Our solar-pairing guide covers exactly how that works, if you'd like to look ahead.

★ Plan the first step with the next one in mind

If solar might be in your future, a little foresight now makes it painless later. I'll help you ask an installer the right questions so today's battery doesn't box you in tomorrow. Call (330) 200-8042.

It still ties into your panel

Solar-free doesn't mean simpler wiring. A grid-charged battery still connects to the heart of your home's electricity.

Because the battery and its inverter tie into your main electrical panel — usually through a small backup subpanel or a smart control device — the installation is genuine electrical work. A licensed electrician mounts the battery, wires it in, and sets it up to switch over safely, all under a permit and an inspection, and often with your utility's approval before it's switched on.

That's true whether or not there's a single panel on the roof. The happy part is that almost none of it lands on you — your job is choosing a good installer, deciding what to back up, and picking a spot for the battery. Our install-and-permit guide lays out the whole process.

! Why this is never a DIY project

A home battery stores a great deal of energy and connects to your main panel. Done wrong, that's dangerous and won't pass inspection — and being solar-free doesn't change that one bit. Always use a licensed electrician and pull the permit; I'll gladly help you line one up, and I don't do the wiring myself.

What it's like to live with one

The best news about a grid-charged battery is how little it asks of you once it's up and running.

Day to day, you mostly forget it's there. It charges from the grid, waits quietly, rides out the short outages without a peep, and needs no fuel, no oil, and no yanking a pull-cord. There's a phone app if you'd like to see how full it is, but you don't have to live in it.

Maintenance is light — there's no engine to service. Mostly it's the occasional glance at the app, keeping the area around it clear and ventilated to the maker's clearances, and letting the installer handle any software updates. For many folks, that hands-off calm is the whole appeal.

✓ Very little upkeep, by design

No fuel to buy, no oil to change, nothing to start. A grid-charged battery is about as low-maintenance as home backup gets — keep it clear, glance at the app now and then, and let the pro handle the rest.

The monitoring app, made friendly

A home battery comes with a phone app, and while you never have to master it, a couple of settings are genuinely worth turning on.

The app shows how full the battery is, what's flowing in and out, and a history of any outages it's covered. You can set a backup reserve — a cushion the battery holds back for emergencies — and switch on alerts so your phone tells you when the charge runs low or an outage begins.

That's the whole of it for most folks: a glance now and then, and a couple of helpful notifications. There's no need to memorize screens or fiddle with settings you'll never use. Our monitoring guide covers the one or two screens worth knowing.

★ I can make the app friendly for you

If a new app feels daunting, that's exactly the sort of thing I help with. On a visit I'll set it up, turn on the low-charge and outage alerts that matter, and show you the screens worth knowing. Call (330) 200-8042.

Cost, honestly

I won't quote dollar figures — they vary far too much — but I can be straight with you about the shape of it.

A grid-charged battery skips the cost of panels and their gear, so a solar-free setup can be a smaller, simpler investment than a full solar-and-battery system — and backing up a few essentials is a lighter step than backing up the whole home. None of that is a reason for or against; it's just the honest shape of the trade-offs.

Batteries can also qualify for incentives that change the math, and those vary by year and by home. Treat the price and the incentives as questions for a licensed installer and the current programs — never a firm figure from me before anyone has seen your home.

✓ A smaller first step is a real option

For many homes, a modest, essentials-only, grid-charged battery is the smart money — dependable backup without the largest system. I'll help you gather honest quotes and compare them fairly.

A few myths, cleared up

Some very common beliefs about batteries and solar just aren't so. Let's clear the air gently.

- **'You need solar to have a home battery.'** Not at all — many batteries charge straight from the grid and act as quiet backup on their own.
- **'A grid-charged battery will run my whole house for days.'** Its charge is finite, and with no solar it can't refill until the grid is back. It's built for shorter outages and essentials.
- **'Solar-free means simpler wiring I could do myself.'** No — it still ties into your main panel, which is licensed electrician's work with a permit.
- **'If I skip solar now, I can never add it.'** Usually you can — ask for a solar-ready setup and panels become a straightforward addition later.

✓ When a pitch sounds too good, ask a plain question

How long will it really last under my loads, with no sun to refill it? Who handles the permit? A good installer welcomes those questions. So do I.

Questions worth asking before you decide

Whether you're talking to a salesperson or to me, these questions keep the conversation honest.

Q: How long will this back up my home, and can it refill during an outage?

For a grid-charged battery, the honest answer is that it runs on its stored charge and can't refill until the grid returns. Ask for a plain answer tied to your must-run list, not a best-case number.

Q: Whole home or essential circuits — which am I being quoted?

The two setups differ a lot in cost and in how long a fixed charge lasts. Make sure you know which you're getting, and why it fits your outages.

Q: Can this be made solar-ready so I can add panels later?

If solar might be in your future, ask now. Many batteries and inverters can be chosen so adding panels later is straightforward rather than a start-over.

Q: Who pulls the permit, and does the utility need to approve it?

Even with no solar, it ties into your main panel. The answer should be a confident 'we handle the permit,' and they should know your utility's process.

✓ There's no silly question

This touches money, safety, and comfort all at once. Ask until you're sure — a good salesperson, or I, should welcome every single question.

Is a standalone battery for you?

There's no single right answer, but these patterns hold up well. See which one sounds like your home.

- **You want backup now, solar maybe later:** a grid-charged battery gives you quiet backup today and an easy path to panels.
- **Your roof isn't great for solar:** shade, a north slope, or a small roof make a solar-free battery the sensible route.
- **You're watching the budget:** skipping panels can make a battery a smaller, simpler first step.
- **Your outages are mostly short:** a fixed charge that refills when the grid returns is a fine match for common, brief outages.
- **You fear long, multi-day outages:** a solar-free battery is one layer — consider a generator for the endurance it can't provide.

★ Let's see if it fits together

Tell me about your roof, your budget, and your outages, and I'll help you see honestly whether a standalone battery is your answer — with nothing to sell you. Call (330) 200-8042.

A simple way to decide

When it feels like a lot, come back to a few plain questions. Your answers point the way.

- ❑ Mostly short outages, and you just want quiet backup? A grid-charged battery is likely all you need.
- ❑ Roof shaded, north-facing, or small — or solar just not in the budget yet? Solar-free is the sensible route.
- ❑ Might want panels someday? Ask for a solar-ready setup and add them when you're ready.
- ❑ Worried about long, multi-day outages or a well? A battery is one layer — think about a generator for the endurance.

✓ Name your outages, and the answer follows

Almost every good decision here starts with how long your outages run and what you truly need to keep on. Name those, and a standalone battery either fits or points you to a fuller plan.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from folks considering a battery without solar, answered plainly.

Q: Do I need solar panels to have a home battery?

No. Many home batteries charge straight from the grid and act as quiet backup on their own. Solar is an optional partner, not a requirement.

Q: If there's no solar, how does the battery recharge?

From the grid. It tops up from ordinary grid power when the power's on, and recharges from that restored power after an outage. The honest catch is that it can't refill while the grid is down.

Q: What happens if a standalone battery runs out during an outage?

With no solar, it waits for the grid to return before it can refill. That's why you size it, and keep the backup list, to the outages you actually get — and why essentials stretch it much further.

Q: Can I add solar to a standalone battery later?

Usually yes. If you tell your installer up front, many setups can be made solar-ready, so adding panels later is a straightforward addition rather than starting over.

Q: Is a solar-free battery cheaper or simpler to install?

It skips the panels and their gear, so it can be a smaller, simpler step. But it still ties into your main panel, so it's licensed electrician's work with a permit — solar or no solar.

★ Still have questions? That's what I'm here for

Getting comfortable with a battery before you spend is exactly the kind of thing I love to help with. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and let's talk it through, no pressure.

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 a standalone home battery without solar 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 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

Standalone Battery vs. Battery With Solar

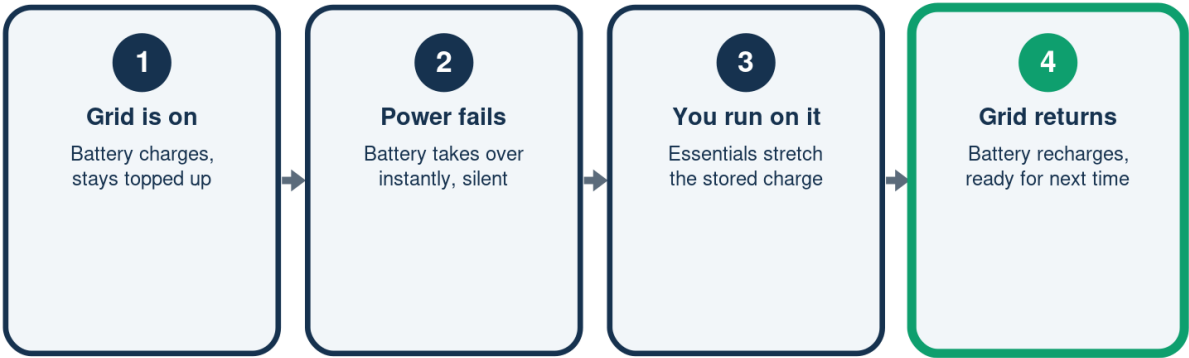
You can start grid-only and add solar later

	Grid-charged	With solar added
Charges from	The grid	Grid and sun
Normal days	Quiet backup	Backup + savings
In an outage	Waits for grid	Refills by day
Good when	You want it now	Roof and sun fit
Add solar	Anytime later	Already done

No solar needed for backup — but you can add it down the road.

How a Grid-Charged Battery Backs You Up

Silent, instant, and hands-off — no solar required



With no solar, it refills once the grid comes back.

In an Outage: No Solar vs. With Solar

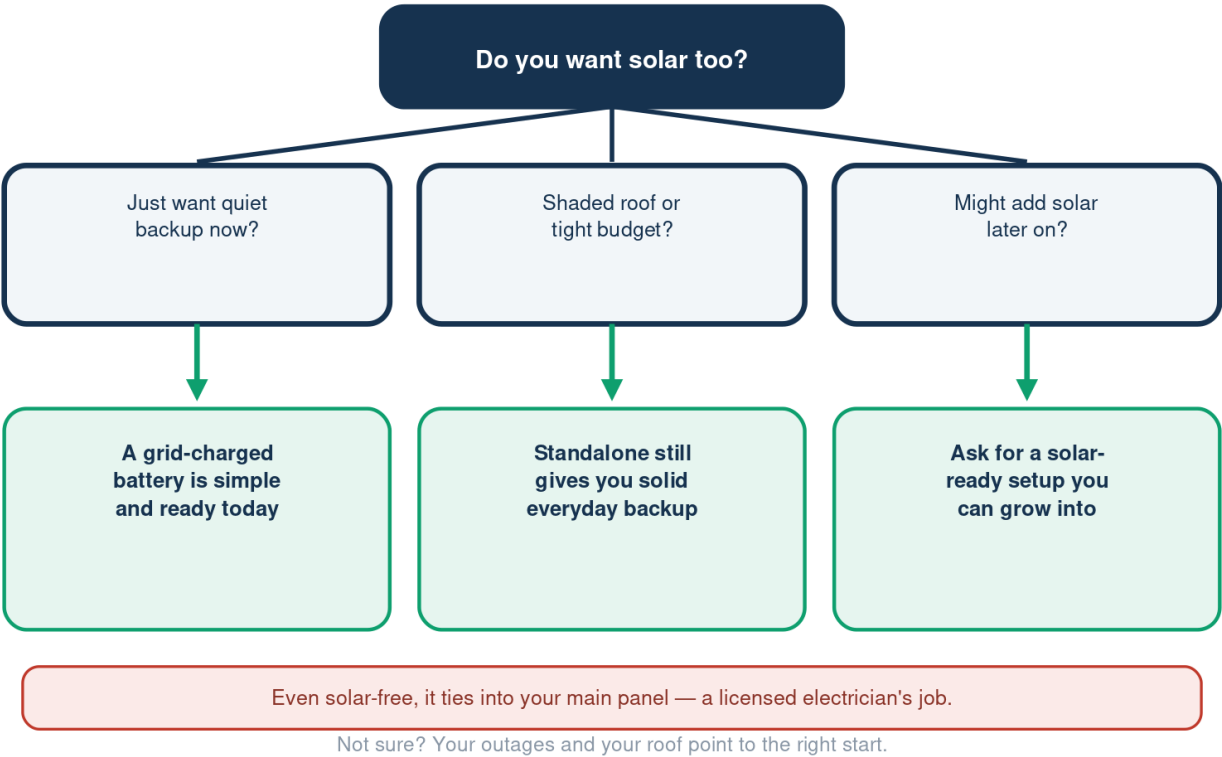
The one honest difference to plan around

	No solar	With solar
Hour one	Runs essentials	Runs + recharges
Refill mid-outage	Waits for grid	Sun tops it up
A cloudy spell	No refill	Little refill
Best suited to	Short outages	Longer daytime

Without solar, plan the battery around your real outages.

Is a Standalone Battery Right for You?

For quiet, simple backup, it often is





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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.

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