



An Extended Guide · No. 1389

Questions to Ask Your Electrician About an Interlock

The right questions
make hiring easy

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 — panel work is a licensed electrician's job

A generator interlock kit is installed inside your home's electrical panel, and panel work is among the most dangerous jobs in any house. The power inside a panel can injure or kill even with the lights off, and a wiring mistake can start a fire or push deadly voltage back onto the lines outside, where a utility crew may be working. Adding an interlock — the sliding plate, the generator breaker, and the inlet it connects to — is a licensed electrician's job, almost always with a permit and an inspection. It is never a do-it-yourself project, and it is never something I do myself. This guide is here to help you understand, choose, and safely use an interlock — not to wire one. And please, never try to shortcut all this by backfeeding a generator through a wall or dryer outlet with a double-ended cord; that shortcut kills people, and an interlock kit is the safe, legal way to do the very thing it tempts you to do. Because this is panel work, the person you hire must be a licensed electrician — these questions help you pick a good one and know what you're getting.

The right questions make hiring easy

An interlock is only as good as the person who installs it. This guide hands you the questions to ask at the quote or consult, so you hire a licensed, experienced electrician you can trust — and spot the ones you can't.

I'm Bill. Since an interlock lives inside your electrical panel, the person doing the work has to be a licensed electrician — that part isn't up for debate. But not every electrician installs interlocks often, or is equally clear about permits and pricing. A few plain questions, asked kindly, sort the trustworthy pros from the rest.

You don't need to sound like an expert to ask these. I'll give you the question, tell you why it matters, and describe what a good answer sounds like — and I'm glad to help you line up a trustworthy local electrician myself.

★ Want help finding a good electrician?

I keep a short list of licensed electricians I trust in the area. Call or text (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you connect with the right one.

The questions, on one page

If you remember only these, you'll hire wisely.

- ❑ Ask if a listed interlock is available for your exact panel.
- ❑ Confirm they're a licensed, insured electrician who installs interlocks.
- ❑ Make sure they'll pull the permit and arrange the inspection.
- ❑ Ask where the outdoor inlet goes, how the cord runs, and how they'll size things to your generator.
- ❑ Ask them to label the panel and walk you through the steps before they leave.
- ❑ Get a written quote, ask about warranty and callback — and get two or three to compare.

✓ Good answers are clear and unhurried

A trustworthy electrician welcomes your questions and answers plainly. Evasiveness or pressure is your signal to look elsewhere.

Why the right electrician matters so much

This isn't a job where 'good enough' is good enough.

An interlock's safety lives in the details — the right listed kit for your panel, the generator breaker sized correctly, the isolation that keeps the two power sources apart, the grounding and neutral handled properly. Done well, it protects your family for years. Done carelessly, it can quietly undercut the very safety it's meant to provide.

That's why choosing a licensed, experienced, honest electrician is the most important decision in the whole project — more than the exact price. And good questions are how you find that person.

✓ The installer matters more than the parts

A careful electrician with a simple interlock beats a sloppy one every time. Choose the person as thoughtfully as the plan.

'Is a listed interlock available for my exact panel?'

This is the very first thing worth asking, because not every kit fits every panel.

Interlock plates are made to match particular panel brands and layouts, and using a listed kit made for your panel is what keeps it code-approved and inspectable. Ask directly whether a listed interlock is available for your specific panel. A good answer is a confident yes with the kind named, or an honest 'let me confirm by looking at your panel.'

If your panel is old, unusual, or completely full, a good electrician will tell you plainly what that means — perhaps a different approach, or a bit of work first. Our panel-compatibility guide covers what makes a panel a good fit.

! Beware a one-size answer

A pro who won't check your actual panel, or waves off the fit question, is skipping the most basic step. Insist they confirm the right listed kit for your panel.

'Are you licensed and insured?'

This is the non-negotiable checkpoint, so ask it early and plainly.

Ask directly: 'Are you a licensed electrician, and are you insured?' A reputable pro answers without hesitation and can show proof. Panel work legally requires a licensed electrician, and insurance protects you if something goes wrong during the job. It's also fair to ask how often they install interlocks specifically — experience with this exact job is worth seeking out.

Anyone cagey about a license, or not licensed for electrical work, is an automatic no for panel work — no matter how friendly or confident they seem.

! No license, no job

If someone can't confirm they're a licensed electrician, that's the end of the conversation for panel work. This one truly isn't negotiable.

'Will you pull the permit and arrange the inspection?'

This single question tells you a great deal about an electrician's integrity.

Ask plainly whether they'll pull the permit and arrange the inspection. The right answer is a confident yes — a reputable electrician does this as a matter of course, because an interlock ties a generator into your home's electrical system. If they suggest skipping the permit to save a little money or time, treat it as a serious red flag about how they approach safety and rules.

The permit brings an independent inspector to confirm the work is safe, which protects you and can matter for insurance. Our permits-and-inspection guide explains why it's worth insisting on.

! 'Skip the permit' means walk away

An electrician who offers to dodge the permit is showing you their judgment. That's a warning worth heeding before they ever touch your panel.

'Where will the inlet go, and how does the cord run?'

You'll live with this placement for years, so it's worth talking through together.

Ask where they'd mount the outdoor inlet box and how the cord will run from your generator's spot to it, and from the inlet to the panel inside. A good answer weighs what's convenient for you — easy to reach in the weather, a sensible spot for the generator well away from the house — against keeping the run short and tidy. It shouldn't be an afterthought.

If a spot closer to the panel would simplify the run, a thoughtful electrician will mention it. Our inlet-box-and-cord guide helps you picture a good location before they arrive.

✓ A good answer weighs both

Look for an electrician who balances your convenience with a clean, sensible cord run — and explains the trade-off in plain terms.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Most of these questions are the same everywhere, but town and country each add a wrinkle worth raising with your electrician.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, you'll usually have several licensed electricians to choose from, which makes getting more than one quote easy. Your inlet run is often short, and your must-run list is modest.

- More electricians nearby means easier comparison shopping — ask each the same questions.
- Ask about a tidy, close inlet spot, since a smaller lot often allows a short run.
- Confirm the listed interlock for your exact panel brand.
- Local reputation is easy to check with neighbors and reviews.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country on a private well, add two questions: can the interlock and your generator power the well pump, and how will the longer cord run be handled on a larger property?

- Ask specifically about powering a 240-volt well pump through the interlock, and sizing the generator to it.
- Raise the longer cord run up front — it affects both the plan and the quote.
- Ask neighbors on wells who they trust; rural word-of-mouth is gold.
- A pro who knows your township or county's permit office is a real plus.

★ On a well and not sure what to ask?

I'll help you frame the well-pump and cord-run questions so you get clear answers. Call (330) 200-8042.

'How will you size things to my generator?'

The interlock, the generator breaker, and the inlet all need to suit the generator you'll actually use.

Ask how they'll match the generator breaker and inlet to your generator's output and the cord that comes with it. A good electrician will ask about your generator — or help you choose one first — rather than guessing. This is how you avoid an inlet or breaker that doesn't suit your machine. You don't need to know the numbers; you need to hear that they'll size it to your generator, not to a generic assumption.

If you haven't bought a generator yet, say so; a thoughtful pro will help you plan around the right size. Our sizing guide walks through matching a generator to what you want to run.

✓ Listen for 'sized to your generator'

The good answer ties the breaker, inlet, and cord to your specific generator — never a one-size guess. That phrase is what you want to hear.

'Can I get a written, itemized quote?'

A clear quote protects both of you and makes comparison possible.

Ask for the quote in writing, itemized — the listed interlock and generator breaker, the outdoor inlet and cord, the permit and inspection, any panel work needed first, and the total. This lets you compare quotes fairly and prevents misunderstandings later. Be wary of anyone who'll only give a vague verbal number, or who pushes for a big deposit before any work begins.

Our interlock cost-and-quotes guide covers reading and comparing quotes in more detail, if you'd like to go deeper before you ask.

! Verbal-only is a warning sign

A reputable electrician puts it in writing. A vague, verbal-only quote is hard to compare and easy to dispute — ask for it on paper.

'Will you label the panel and show me the steps?'

This question makes sure you end up confident, not just wired up.

Ask whether they'll clearly label the interlock and the generator breaker on your panel, and walk you through operating it, hands-on, before they leave — starting the generator outside, plugging in the cord, switching the main off, sliding the plate, turning the generator breaker on, then bringing up circuits one at a time, and reversing it all to switch back. A good electrician says yes gladly.

That end-of-visit walk-through is the single most valuable few minutes of the whole project, so make sure it's part of the deal. Our installation-day and using-during-an-outage guides cover what it should include.

★ I like to be there for that

If you'd like, I'll join for the walk-through so I learn your setup and can refresh you anytime after. Call (330) 200-8042.

'What warranty and callback do you offer?'

Good work stands behind itself, so it's fair to ask how.

Ask what warranty covers the parts and the labor, and what happens if something isn't right after the install — will they come back, and is there a charge? A confident, reputable electrician has a clear answer and stands behind their work. This also tells you they expect to be around and reachable, which matters for a system you'll rely on for years.

It's a perfectly normal question, and a good pro won't be the least bit put off by it.

✓ Standing behind the work is a green light

An electrician who explains their warranty and callback plainly is showing you they expect to do it right and be there if you need them.

'What if my panel needs work first?'

Sometimes the honest answer is that the panel needs attention before an interlock — so ask about it up front.

Ask what happens if your panel turns out to be too full, too old, or not a match for a listed interlock. A trustworthy electrician will explain the options plainly — what work would be needed, why, and roughly what it changes — rather than either hiding it or using it to pad the job. If they flag panel work, it's fair to ask them to explain it in plain English and, if you like, to get a second opinion.

This isn't a reason to worry; it's a reason to hire someone honest. A good foundation is worth getting right before you build on it.

★ Told your panel needs work?

I'm glad to help you understand whether that makes sense before you decide anything.
Call or text (330) 200-8042.

Get more than one quote, apples to apples

Comparing a few electricians is the simplest way to hire well.

Talk to two or three licensed electricians, ask each the same questions, and get each to quote the very same scope in writing — the same interlock for your panel, the same inlet plan, the permit included. That shows you the fair range of price and approach, and lets you compare not just cost but how clearly each explains the work and how comfortable you feel with them.

Comfort matters here — you're letting this person into your home and trusting them with your family's safety. Pick the one you understand and trust, not simply the cheapest.

✓ Comfort counts, not just price

The right fit is worth a little more. Choose the electrician who explains things patiently and never makes you feel rushed.

It's completely fine to ask lots of questions

I want you to feel empowered here, not shy.

Please don't ever feel that you're being a bother by asking questions. This is your home, your money, and your family's safety, and a good electrician is glad to explain. Ask them to slow down, to repeat something, or to say it a different way. If something feels off — the pressure, the vagueness, an unwillingness to answer — trust that feeling and slow down.

You are never obligated to decide on the spot, sign anything, or let anyone start work. 'I need to think about it and get another quote' is a complete, reasonable answer — always. Honest professionals respect that; only high-pressure sellers don't.

! You can always say 'not today'

You never owe anyone an immediate yes. Taking your time and asking every question you have is exactly what a careful customer does.

A question checklist to bring

Copy these onto paper and take them to each quote visit.

- ☐ Is a listed interlock available for my exact panel? Are you licensed and insured? (Ask for proof.)
- ☐ Will you pull the permit and arrange the inspection?
- ☐ Where will the inlet go, how does the cord run, and how will you size things to my generator?
- ☐ Will you label the panel and walk me through the steps before you leave?
- ☐ What warranty and callback do you offer, and what if my panel needs work first?

★ I'll help you prepare

Want to go into these conversations ready? I'll help you with the questions and what good answers sound like. Call (330) 200-8042.

Common hiring mistakes

A few missteps to avoid when choosing an electrician.

- **Hiring the first or cheapest** without comparing or checking a license.
- **Skipping the fit question** — not confirming a listed interlock for your exact panel.
- **Accepting a verbal-only quote** that's hard to hold anyone to.
- **Feeling rushed** into a decision by a persuasive pitch.
- **Ignoring your gut** when something just feels off.

! Cheapest isn't the goal

The lowest quote can hide a missing permit, cut corners, or inexperience. Hire on trust, license, and clarity — not just price.

You're hiring a pro, not just a job

The right electrician is a relationship worth having.

The electrician who installs your interlock is who you'll call if it ever needs service, if you want other electrical work down the road, or just to answer a question. So it's worth building that relationship with someone local, licensed, and trustworthy. A pro who did right by you once, explained things patiently, and stood behind their work is exactly the person you want in your contacts for years to come.

✓ You're hiring for the long run

Think of this as choosing your electrician, not just this one install. The right one becomes a trusted resource.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about hiring for an interlock.

Q: What's the first thing I should ask?

Whether a listed interlock is available for your exact panel, and whether they're a licensed, insured electrician who installs interlocks. Those two answers set the foundation for everything else.

Q: What's the biggest red flag?

Offering to skip the permit, being cagey about a license, or pressuring you to decide fast. Any of these means keep looking, no matter how friendly the pitch.

Q: Should I get more than one quote?

Yes — get two or three written quotes for the same scope. It shows the fair range and lets you compare approach and comfort, not just price.

Q: Is it rude to ask so many questions?

Not at all. It's your home, money, and safety. A good electrician welcomes your questions — and you never have to decide on the spot.

★ Want help vetting someone?

Call or text (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you evaluate an electrician or point you to one I trust.

How I help you hire well

Finding and vetting a good electrician is one of the most valuable things I do — with nothing to sell you.

I'll help you prepare your questions, understand the answers, and compare electricians fairly. Better yet, I keep a short list of licensed electricians in the area I trust, and can help connect you with the right one for your home and panel. I earn no referral fees — my only interest is that you get a safe, honest install from someone dependable. And I'm glad to sit in on the quote visit if you'd like a friendly second set of ears.

★ A trusted introduction

Sometimes the best help is knowing who to call. Reach me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll point you to a licensed electrician I trust.

The short version to carry with you

If the details blur, hold onto these.

- ❑ Ask if a listed interlock fits your exact panel, and confirm licensed and insured.
- ❑ Make sure they'll pull the permit — 'skip it' means walk away.
- ❑ Ask about the inlet, the cord run, sizing to your generator, labeling, and a walk-through.
- ❑ Get written, itemized quotes from two or three, compare fairly, and never feel rushed.

✓ Keep this guide handy

Take the question checklist to each quote visit — keep this guide with your home papers.

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 asking the right questions about an interlock 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.

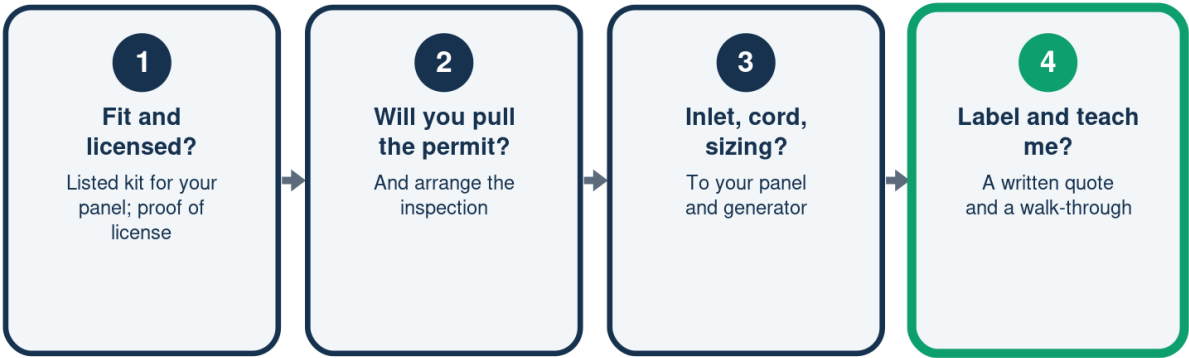
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day,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

The Questions That Matter

Ask every electrician these



Clear, unhurried answers are the sign of a pro worth hiring.

Green Lights vs. Red Flags

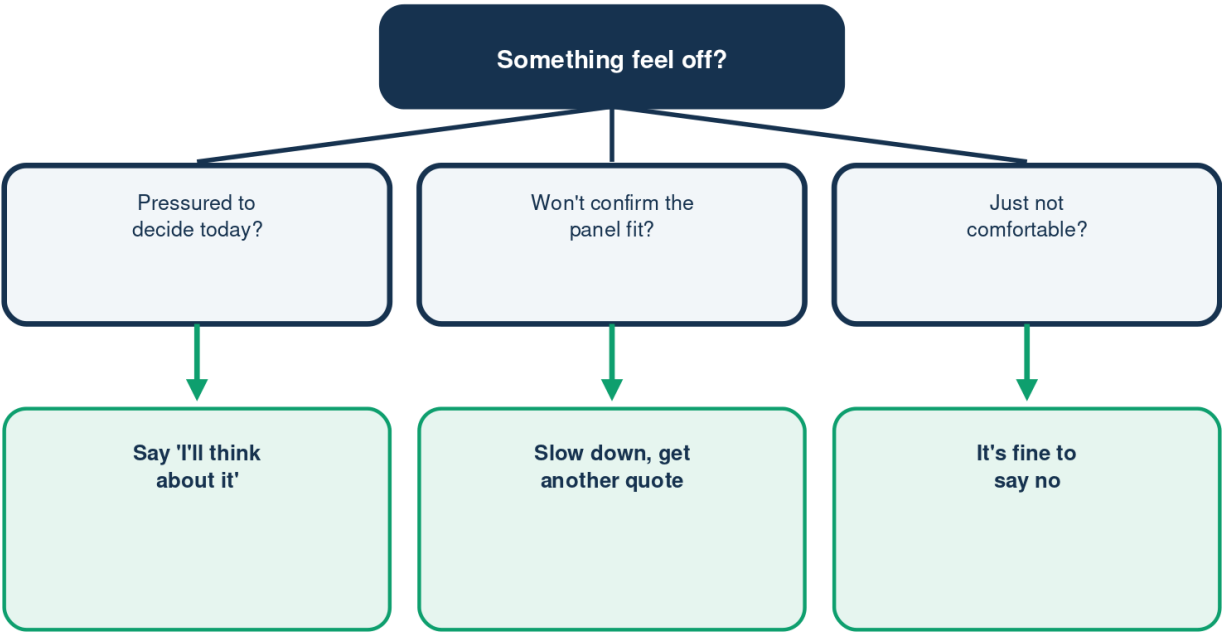
Reading an electrician's answers

	Green light	Red flag
License	Shows proof gladly	Cagey about it
Panel fit	Confirms a listed kit	Waves it off
Permit	Pulls it as routine	Offers to skip it
Manner	Patient, no rush	Pressures you

Pressure, vagueness, and permit-dodging mean keep looking.

Feeling Unsure? Trust Your Gut

You never owe an immediate yes

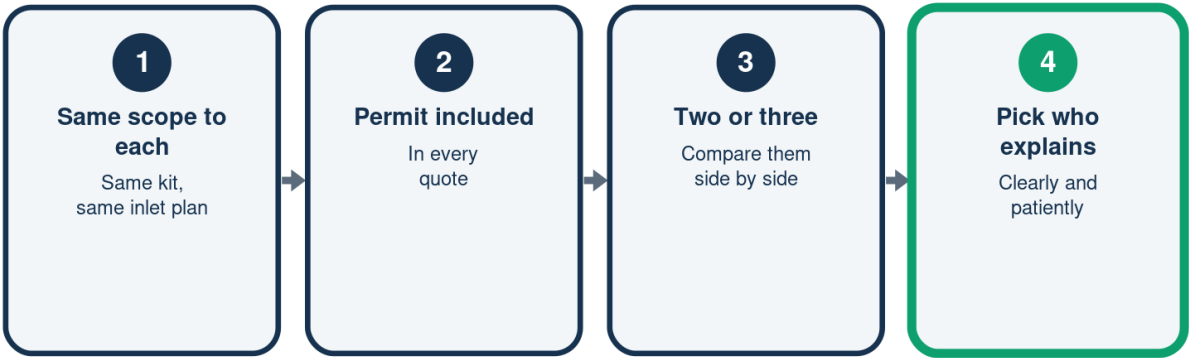


Honest pros respect 'not today' -- only pressure sellers don't. Trust that.

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

Getting Fair, Matching Quotes

Apples to apples, every time



Comfort and clarity matter as much as the number.



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