

Outages & Your Phone

THE 60-SECOND VERSION

- 1 Internet-based phones die the moment the power or internet drops — unless backed up.
- 2 The whole chain needs power: the modem AND the router, not just one.
- 3 A small battery (a UPS) on that gear keeps the phone alive for a while.
- 4 A cellular home base comes with its own battery and needs no internet at all.
- 5 Always keep a charged cell phone — it's your final, dependable way to reach 911.

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Internet Outages and Your Home Phone — What Still Works

What keeps working when the internet goes down — and what goes quiet.

————— **An Extended Guide · No. 1737** —————

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Bill Davis — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · bill@billshometech.com · Atwater, Ohio

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

In a hurry? Here's the whole thing on one page. When the power or the internet goes out, whether your home phone still works depends entirely on how it's carried. The old copper line powered itself, so it rode through storms. An internet or cable phone needs electricity for the modem and the router, so it goes quiet unless those are on a battery. A cellular home base has its own battery built in, so it keeps going on its own for a while.

- Internet-based phones die the moment the power or internet drops — unless backed up.
- The whole chain needs power: the modem AND the router, not just one.
- A small battery (a UPS) on that gear keeps the phone alive for a while.
- A cellular home base comes with its own battery and needs no internet at all.
- Always keep a charged cell phone — it's your final, dependable way to reach 911.

WATCH OUT

The most common surprise is a phone that worked fine for years going dead in the first storm after a switch to internet service. If your phone now runs over the internet, it needs a battery backup — don't learn that during an emergency.

1. First, the Honest Picture

Why some phones survive an outage and some don't.

Let me start with the part that matters most, because it's the question behind every worried call I get about this. When the lights go out or the internet drops, will your home phone still work? The honest answer is: it depends entirely on what kind of phone you have. Some keep right on ringing. Some go dead in an instant.

The old copper landline had one quiet gift — it drew its own power from the phone line itself, so a storm could knock out your electricity and the phone would still have a dial tone. That's the thing people rightly miss as the old lines are retired.

The newer phones — the ones that run over your internet or the cable line — don't do that on their own. But that's not a reason to worry. It's a reason to plan, and the planning is easy and affordable. This guide walks you through exactly what still works in an outage and how to make sure your phone is one of the ones that does.

GOOD TO KNOW

This matters most for anyone who leans on the phone for safety — folks living alone, anyone with a medical condition, or a household where a storm could mean needing to call for help. If that's you, read on carefully; it's worth getting right.

2. Why Internet Phones Go Quiet

Follow the power, and it makes sense.

To understand what survives an outage, it helps to see why an internet phone dies in one. Your call no longer travels over a self-powered copper pair. It travels as internet data through a little chain of equipment, and every piece in that chain runs on your household electricity.

The chain usually goes like this: the internet enters your home at a modem or a fiber box; that connects to a router, which shares the internet around the house; and your phone plugs into a phone box or adapter that turns your voice into data. Each of those needs a power outlet. Cut the electricity and all of them go dark at once — and your phone with them.

So the phone isn't broken in an outage; it's simply unpowered, along with the gear it depends on. Once you see it that way, the fix becomes obvious: keep that chain of gear powered, and the phone keeps working. We'll get to exactly how.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some setups combine the modem and router into a single box, and some tuck the phone adapter in too. Fewer boxes means fewer things to keep powered — but the principle is the same: whatever carries your call has to stay powered.

3. The Modem AND the Router

The mistake that quietly undoes a backup.

I want to dwell on one point because it's the single most common mistake I see. Someone buys a battery, plugs the phone box into it, feels safe — and then the power goes out and the phone is dead anyway. Why? Because the modem and the router, upstream of the phone box, lost their power and the internet stopped flowing.

Think of it like a garden hose in three sections. If any one section is disconnected, no water reaches the end, no matter how good the other two are. Your phone is the end of the hose; the modem, router, and phone box are the sections. All three have to stay powered for your call to reach the end.

WATCH OUT

When you set up any backup, walk the chain with your eyes: the internet-in box, the router, and the phone box. Make sure every one of them is on the battery, not just the obvious one. Miss a single link and the whole backup is wasted.

4. What a Cellular Base Does Differently

A backup built right in.

There's one kind of home phone that sidesteps the whole chain problem, and it's worth understanding because it changes the outage picture completely. A cellular home base is a little box that carries your call over the cell network — the same network a cell phone uses — instead of over your internet. Your normal cordless phones plug right into it.

Because it doesn't use your home internet, there's no modem and router chain to keep alive — just the one box. And most of these bases come with their own built-in battery, so when the power goes out, the box rides on its battery and keeps working all by itself for a while, with no extra equipment to buy or wire up.

For a lot of folks — especially out in the county where internet is spotty — this is the simplest outage-ready home phone there is. The one requirement is a usable cell signal where the box sits, and the one limit is that the built-in battery, like any battery, only lasts so long.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some standalone VoIP adapters also come in a version with cellular backup and a battery built in, so the phone keeps working even if the internet or power drops. If outage coverage matters to you, ask about these when you choose a service.

5. Why the Old Copper Still Wins Here

Credit where it's due — and why it's fading anyway.

It's only fair to give the old copper line its due. On the single question of outages, it's still the champion: it powers itself from the phone line, so it works in a storm when everything else in the house is dark. If you still have copper and it still works, that's a genuine advantage worth appreciating.

The catch is that copper is on borrowed time. The phone companies are retiring it street by street because it's expensive to maintain, and repairs can get slow as they stop investing in it. So while copper wins on the outage question today, it's not a long-term plan. The sensible move is to enjoy its outage toughness while you have it, and know your backup plan for when the carrier's retirement notice arrives.

GOOD TO KNOW

Even on copper, a cordless phone won't work in an outage, because the cordless base needs a wall outlet. Keep one plain corded phone in the house — it runs off the copper line's own power and will work when the cordless won't.

6. A Small Battery for the Gear

One box keeps the whole chain alive.

For most homes with an internet phone, my favorite answer is a small battery backup called a UPS — it stands for “uninterruptible power supply,” but you can think of it as a power strip with a battery inside. You plug your modem, router, and phone box into it, and when the power goes out, the battery takes over seamlessly.

The beauty of it is that one box covers the whole chain. A single purchase keeps your internet-in box, your router, and your phone adapter all running — which means not only does your phone keep working, so does your internet, so you can still look things up or send a message during the outage. It's one of the most worthwhile small purchases a modern home can make.

WATCH OUT

Many UPS units have two kinds of outlets: battery-backed ones and surge-only ones. Your gear must go in the battery-backed outlets, which are usually labeled. Plug into the wrong ones and your phone still dies in an outage. Check the labels.

7. How Long a Battery Keeps You Going

Sizing it to the outages you actually get.

The question everyone asks is: how long will a battery keep my phone alive? The honest answer is that it depends on two things — how big the battery is, and how much power your gear draws. The good news is that networking gear sips fairly little power, so even a modest battery can run it for a useful while.

As a rough guide, a small UPS might keep a basic modem and router going for around an hour, give or take, while a larger one sized for the job can stretch to several hours. Those are approximate, and your real results depend on your exact equipment, so treat them as a ballpark, not a promise. The way to know for sure is to test yours once.

- A smaller battery covers the short outages that are most common.
- A larger battery buys more hours for the occasional long one.
- The fewer boxes you run on it, the longer it lasts.
- A healthy, not-too-old battery lasts longer than a worn one.

TIP

If you're not sure how big to go, err on the larger side — the extra runtime is cheap insurance, and you'll be glad of it in a long storm. I can measure your gear's draw and recommend a size that fits your situation.

8. The Provider's Own Battery Module

The simplest set-and-forget option.

Another easy path is the battery module your own phone provider offers. Many cable and fiber phone services sell a battery unit made to slot right into their equipment and keep the phone alive for a few hours when the power's out. It's built for their gear, so there's nothing for you to figure out.

The appeal is simplicity. You ask the provider for it, they supply the right unit, and it keeps the phone working through a typical short outage. When the power comes back, it recharges itself. For someone who wants a set-and-forget answer, this is often the one to reach for.

The thing to check is what exactly the battery keeps alive. Some provider batteries power the phone portion but not the internet, or they last a shorter time than you'd like. Ask how long it runs and whether it keeps the whole chain up or only the voice service.

GOOD TO KNOW

When you sign up for an internet or cable phone, ask right then whether a battery backup is included or extra, and how many hours it gives you. It's much easier to sort out at sign-up than to chase down later.

9. A Cellular Backup for Your Internet

Keeping the internet itself alive — called failover.

Here's a subtle but important point. Keeping your gear powered through an outage keeps it ready to work, but an internet phone also needs the internet connection itself to be up. If the same storm that cut your power also knocked out the internet line to your neighborhood, your powered-up gear still can't make a call.

There's a solution for that too, called cellular failover. A special router (or a small box added to your existing one) watches your main internet line, and the moment it drops, it switches over to a cell connection automatically — the same way a phone uses cell data. When your main line comes back, it switches back on its own. The switch isn't instant; it usually takes a few seconds to a half-minute, and cellular data is often limited, but it keeps the essentials going.

GOOD TO KNOW

In practice, the internet often stays up during a power outage, because the phone and cable companies' equipment has its own backup power. Failover is for the times it doesn't — and a cellular home base sidesteps the worry entirely by not using your internet at all.

10. Always Keep a Charged Cell Phone

Your final, always-there way to reach 911.

No matter which backup you choose for the home phone, there's one piece I insist on for everyone: a charged cell phone, kept ready. It's the ultimate backstop. If every battery runs down, if the outage drags on for days, the cell phone is your last and most dependable way to call for help.

A cell phone doesn't depend on your home's power or your internet. It runs on its own battery and reaches the nearest cell tower, which has its own backup power. Even a simple, basic cell phone — one you keep just for emergencies — does the job. In most cases a cell phone can dial 911 even with no active service plan at all.

WATCH OUT

A backup cell phone only helps if it's charged. Keep it plugged in or top it up regularly so it's ready. A dead cell phone in a drawer is no backstop at all. Make charging it a small, steady habit — say, the first of every month.

11. 911 During an Outage

The safety question, answered plainly.

This is the part that deserves the clearest answer, because it's about safety. An internet or cellular home phone can call 911 just fine in normal times. The difference in an outage is simple: if the phone has no power, it can't call anyone, 911 included. So your ability to reach 911 in an outage comes down to whether your phone has a working battery behind it.

That's exactly why the layered plan matters. A battery on your gear, or a cellular base with its own battery, keeps 911 reachable for the length of that battery. And the charged cell phone is the backstop for when the battery is gone. Between the two, you always have a way to reach help, no matter how long the lights stay off.

WATCH OUT

An internet home phone also keeps a “registered address” that it sends to 911. Make sure yours is correct, and if your provider allows it, dial 933 to hear the address read back as a test. A powered phone that sends the wrong address helps no one.

12. Don't Forget Your Medical Alert

It can go quiet in the very storm you need it.

Your home phone isn't the only thing that can fall silent in an outage. A medical alert pendant whose base plugs into the wall — and especially one that dials out over your phone line — faces the same problem. In the very storm when you'd most want it, it can be among the first things to fail.

Most proper medical alert bases have a small built-in battery for exactly this reason, but those batteries also age and need checking. And if the device reaches help over your internet phone, it only works if that phone's whole chain is on backup power. The safest versions reach help over a cellular signal with their own battery, independent of your phone and internet entirely.

WATCH OUT

Ask your medical alert company two things: does the device have its own battery, and how does it reach the monitoring center in an outage? If the answer depends on your phone line or internet, consider a cellular version. Test it either way.

13. A Whole-Home Generator

The bigger answer for long, frequent outages.

If you live where the power goes out often and for a long time — and some stretches of the county do — a battery that lasts a few hours may not be enough. The bigger solution is a generator, which makes its own electricity and can run your whole house, phone gear included, for days if need be.

There are two broad kinds. A portable generator is wheeled out, fueled, and started when you need it — cheaper, but it needs fuel on hand and some handling. A whole-home standby generator is installed permanently, usually runs on natural gas or propane, and switches on automatically when the power drops, keeping everything running with no effort from you. That convenience comes at a higher cost.

WATCH OUT

A generator is a serious piece of equipment. Never run a portable generator indoors or in a garage — the exhaust is deadly. Whole-home units should be installed by a professional. Treat the safety rules as non-negotiable.

14. A Portable Power Station

A flexible middle ground.

Between a small UPS and a full generator sits another option worth knowing about: a portable power station. These are large rechargeable batteries in a box with ordinary outlets on the front. You charge one up and keep it ready, and in an outage you plug your phone gear — or a lamp, or a fan — straight into it.

A bigger one can run your modem, router, and phone box for many hours, well beyond what a small UPS manages, and it doubles as backup power for other small needs during a long outage. Unlike a generator, it makes no fumes and no noise, so it's safe to use indoors. The trade-off is that you have to remember to keep it charged, and you switch it over by hand rather than automatically.

GOOD TO KNOW

A portable power station is a nice fit for someone who wants more runtime than a small UPS but isn't ready for a permanent generator. Keep it charged, and label which outlets your phone gear should go into so there's no fumbling in the dark.

15. Matching the Backup to Your Outages

How long do your power cuts actually last?

The right backup depends on the outages you actually get. There's no sense buying a generator if your power blinks off for twenty minutes twice a year, and a small battery isn't enough if you lose power for two days every winter storm. Match the solution to your real experience.

- 1 Think back over the last few years — how long do your outages usually last?
- 2 Short flickers and brief cuts: a small UPS or the provider's battery is plenty.
- 3 Occasional multi-hour outages: a larger UPS, plus a charged cell phone.
- 4 Frequent long outages lasting many hours or days: consider a generator.
- 5 Whatever you choose, always keep the charged cell phone as the final backstop.

Most homes around here are well served by a good battery and a charged cell phone — that pairing covers the great majority of outages we see. Step up to a generator only if your situation genuinely calls for it. Don't over-buy, and don't under-plan.

GOOD TO KNOW

Your local experience is the best guide. Neighbors on the same stretch of line usually see similar outages, so a quick chat over the fence can tell you a lot about what to plan for.

16. Setting Up a Battery, Step by Step

It's easier than it sounds.

If you go the UPS route — and for most homes I'd suggest it — here's how to set one up so it actually protects the whole phone chain. It's genuinely simple once you see it done.

- 1 Place the UPS near your internet equipment, on a shelf or the floor.
- 2 Plug the UPS into the wall and let its internal battery charge fully first.
- 3 Find the outlets marked for battery backup, not the surge-only ones.
- 4 Plug your modem, your router, and your phone box into those battery outlets.
- 5 Unplug the wall power for a moment to test — the phone should stay up.

That test at the end is the important part — it proves the whole chain survives a cut, and it tells you roughly how long you've got before the battery runs down. Do it once when you set up, and you'll know exactly where you stand when a real outage comes.

TIP

Write the date on a bit of tape on the UPS. Batteries weaken with age, and knowing when yours went in tells you when it's due for a check or a swap.

17. Testing Before the Storm

Know it works when the stakes are low.

A backup you've never tested is a backup you can't trust. The whole point is that it works on the worst day, so take a few minutes to prove it works on an ordinary day, when the stakes are low and you can fix anything that's off.

Testing is simple: with everything running on the battery, pull the wall power — or flip off the breaker to that outlet if you're comfortable doing so. Then pick up the phone and listen for a dial tone, and make a quick test call. If the phone works, your backup works. Note roughly how long it keeps going so you know your real runtime.

TIP

Test your backup a couple of times a year — batteries weaken with age, and a battery that gave you three hours when new might give only one after a few years. A quick test catches a tired battery before a storm does.

18. What to Do When the Power Goes Out

A calm little routine.

When the power does go out, a calm routine keeps your phone working as long as possible and makes sure you can always reach help. Here's the simple drill, assuming you've set up a backup.

- 1 Check that your phone still has a dial tone — if your backup is working, it will.
 - 2 Keep non-essential calls short to stretch the battery's runtime.
 - 3 Have your charged cell phone out and ready as the backstop.
 - 4 If the backup runs down and the phone dies, switch to the cell phone for 911.
 - 5 When power returns, let everything come back up and confirm the phone works again.
- The point isn't to ration yourself anxiously — it's just to be aware that the battery is finite, and to lean on the cell phone once it's gone. With a decent backup, most outages pass before the battery ever runs down, and you'll barely notice the difference.

TIP

Keep a flashlight and your charged cell phone in the same known spot, so when the lights go out you can find both in the dark. A little outage kit by the phone saves a lot of fumbling.

19. Preparing Before Storm Season

A short checklist for calmer weather.

The best time to get ready is a quiet afternoon in good weather, not the night a storm is rolling in. A little preparation before storm season means you're never scrambling when the sky turns. Here's what I'd have squared away ahead of time.

- Confirm your home phone has a battery backup, and test that it works.
- Top up and set aside a charged cell phone as the 911 backstop.
- Check that your medical alert and alarm have their own working batteries.
- Put a flashlight and key phone numbers in one known spot by the phone.
- Replace any backup battery that's more than a few years old.

None of these take long, and together they turn a stressful storm night into a handled one. Do them once before the season, and you can ride out the weather knowing your phone — and your way to reach help — will still be there.

GOOD TO KNOW

Spring and late fall are good times to run this little check, before the storm and ice seasons we get around here. Tie it to the clock change if that helps you remember, the same way folks check their smoke alarm batteries.

20. If Your Internet Is Down But Power Is On

A different kind of outage.

Not every outage is a power outage. Sometimes the lights are on but the internet is down — a line cut up the road, trouble at the cable company, or a storm that took out the connection but not your electricity. For an internet phone, this is just as much of a problem as a power cut, because the phone needs the internet to carry the call.

A battery doesn't help here, because the gear has power — it's the connection that's missing. This is where cellular failover for your internet earns its keep, and where a cellular home base shines, since it doesn't touch your home internet at all. And once again, the charged cell phone covers you no matter what, because it reaches a tower directly.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your phone goes dead but your lights are on, check whether your internet is down before you assume the phone is broken. A quick look at the modem's lights usually tells the story — no internet means no internet phone until it's back.

21. Cable, Fiber, and VoIP — Slightly Different

Why the backup isn't one-size-fits-all.

The exact shape of your backup depends a little on what kind of service you have, because each has a slightly different chain of equipment. The principle never changes — keep the chain powered — but the pieces do, which affects how big a battery you want.

On a cable phone, the modem often doubles as the phone box, so you may have fewer pieces to back up. On fiber, the fiber box (sometimes called an ONT) is the key piece, plus your router. With a standalone adapter like Ooma or Vonage, you've got the modem, the

router, and the separate adapter — three pieces. Fewer boxes on the battery means it lasts longer, since there's less to power.

TIP

At a fiber install, ask the technician directly: where does the backup battery go, how long does it last, and how will I know when to replace it? Getting those answers while the installer is there saves a lot of guessing later.

22. Living Alone? Build in Extra Safety

When the phone is a lifeline, layer the plan.

If you live by yourself, the phone during an outage isn't just a convenience — it's your way to reach help, and that deserves extra care. The goal is simple: make sure that no matter what the weather does, you can always call for help. A layered plan is the way to get there.

- Put your phone's whole chain on a good UPS, or use a cellular base with a built-in battery.
- Keep a charged cell phone within reach as the final backstop for 911.
- If you use a medical alert, make it a cellular one that doesn't depend on the phone line, and test it monthly.
- Write your address by the phone — in a panic, it's easy to blank.
- Tell a neighbor or family member what your backup is, so they know you're covered.

None of this is meant to frighten you — it's the opposite. A few small, steady preparations mean you never have to lie awake wondering whether the phone will work in the next storm. This is the kind of layered setup I'm always glad to put together for someone on their own.

WATCH OUT

An old medical alert that dials over the phone line can fail in an outage just like the phone does. A cellular medical alert with its own battery is far safer for someone living alone. Confirm which kind you have, and test it.

23. Telling Your Family the Plan

So they know how to reach you in a storm.

A lot of the worry around outages comes from family far away who can't tell whether Mom's phone is working during a storm. A few written notes settle that worry for everyone and make it clear how to reach you when the weather turns.

- What backup the home phone has, and roughly how long it lasts.
- The cell phone number to use as the backstop if the home phone goes down.
- Whether the medical alert and alarm have their own outage backup.
- Where the charged cell phone and flashlight are kept.

When the power goes out and a worried family member two states away is trying to reach you, those few lines mean they know exactly how — and they know you're not sitting in the dark without a way to call for help. That peace of mind cuts both ways.

24. Common Outage Mistakes

The slip-ups that leave you without a phone.

After setting up a lot of these for folks, I see the same handful of mistakes. None are hard to avoid once you know them, and avoiding them is the difference between a backup that works and one that only seems to.

- Backing up only the phone box and forgetting the modem and router.
- Plugging gear into the surge-only outlets of a UPS instead of the battery ones.
- Never testing the backup, so a tired battery goes unnoticed until a storm.
- Letting the backup cell phone sit dead in a drawer.
- Assuming a medical alert or alarm has its own working backup when it may not.

Every one of these is avoidable with two habits: back up the whole chain, and test it now and then. Do those, keep a charged cell phone handy, and you've covered the ways a backup normally lets people down.

WATCH OUT

Don't assume that because a backup worked when you installed it, it still works today. Batteries fade silently. A two-minute test a couple of times a year is the only way to know you're truly covered.

25. What About the Cordless Handset?

A detail that trips people up.

Here's a detail that catches people even when they've done the backup right. Your cordless phone — the kind with a base that sits in a cradle and a handset you carry around — needs its own wall outlet to power the base. If that base isn't on your battery backup, the cordless phone won't work in an outage even if your internet gear is humming along on the UPS.

So if you rely on a cordless phone, either plug its base into the battery backup too, or keep one plain corded phone in the house. A simple corded phone draws the tiny bit of power it needs from the phone line or the box itself, so it often works when the cordless won't — a handy, cheap backup.

TIP

Keep at least one old-fashioned corded phone somewhere in the house. It costs little, takes no setup, and on many setups it'll give you a dial tone when the cordless handsets have gone dark.

26. Questions I Get About Outages

Quick, plain answers.

Does my internet phone work in an outage? Not on its own — you need a battery on its gear, or a cellular base with its own battery.

Which phone is best for outages? A cellular home base is the simplest, since it has a battery and doesn't need your internet. But the old copper, while it lasts, still wins outright.

How long will a battery last? Usually from about an hour to several hours, depending on its size and your gear. Test yours to know for sure.

What if everything runs down? That's what the charged cell phone is for — always keep one ready as the final way to reach 911.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your question isn't here, it's probably one I've answered many times. There's no charge to ask a question over the phone — just call.

27. A Few Plain Words to Know

The jargon, translated.

Outage-backup talk comes with its own terms that don't mean much to normal people. Here's the short translation so nothing throws you.

- UPS — a power strip with a battery inside that keeps gear running in an outage.
- Modem — the box where the internet enters your home.
- Router — the box that shares the internet around the house.
- Failover — a backup that switches your internet to a cell connection automatically.
- Cellular base — a home phone box that uses the cell network, not your internet.
- Runtime — how long a battery keeps your gear running before it's spent.

TIP

Keep this little list with your guide. When a store clerk or a box uses one of these words, you'll know exactly what they mean and whether it's the piece you need.

28. When to Let Me Set It Up

You don't have to wire it up alone.

I wrote this guide so you'd understand what keeps a phone alive in an outage and feel confident about it. But figuring out which battery to buy, sizing it to your gear, wiring the whole chain into the right outlets, and testing it is exactly the kind of job I'm glad to do for you. I can measure your equipment's power draw and recommend a backup that fits — no guessing, no over-buying.

I come to you, here in Portage County and the nearby towns — Ravenna, Kent, Streetsboro, Aurora, Rootstown, and around Atwater. The first in-home visit is a flat ninety-nine dollars, and if something can be sorted without a trip, I offer remote help too. If you're not completely happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it.

TIP

When you call, my assistant Sophie may answer and take down the details so I can call you back — she's there so you always reach a friendly voice, not a dead end.

29. What I'd Tell My Own Neighbor

The short, honest version.

After 30+ years of professional experience helping folks keep their homes working through our Ohio storms, here's the plain advice I'd give over the fence. Your internet phone will go quiet in an outage unless you plan for it — but planning for it is easy and cheap, so just do it before the next big storm rather than during it.

Put the whole chain — modem, router, phone box — on a good battery, or choose a cellular base that brings its own. Keep a charged cell phone handy as your backstop for 911. Test the backup a couple of times a year, and replace the battery when it fades. That's the whole of it, and it buys you real peace of mind.

GOOD TO KNOW

If any of this feels like a lot, that's normal. You can hand the whole thing to me — picking the backup, sizing it, wiring it, and testing it — and I'll leave you with a phone that keeps working when the lights go out.

30. The Bottom Line

Know what works, and make yours one of them.

So here's where this leaves you. When the power or the internet goes down, the old copper line and a battery-backed cellular base keep working; an internet or cable phone keeps working only if its gear is on a battery; and a charged cell phone always keeps working as the final backstop. That's the whole picture in one breath.

The newer phones have one real weakness compared to copper — they need power and internet. But that weakness is a solved problem, and an affordable one. Back up the chain, keep a cell phone charged, test it now and then, and your modern phone will ring through the storms just as dependably as the old one did. You can rest easy.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

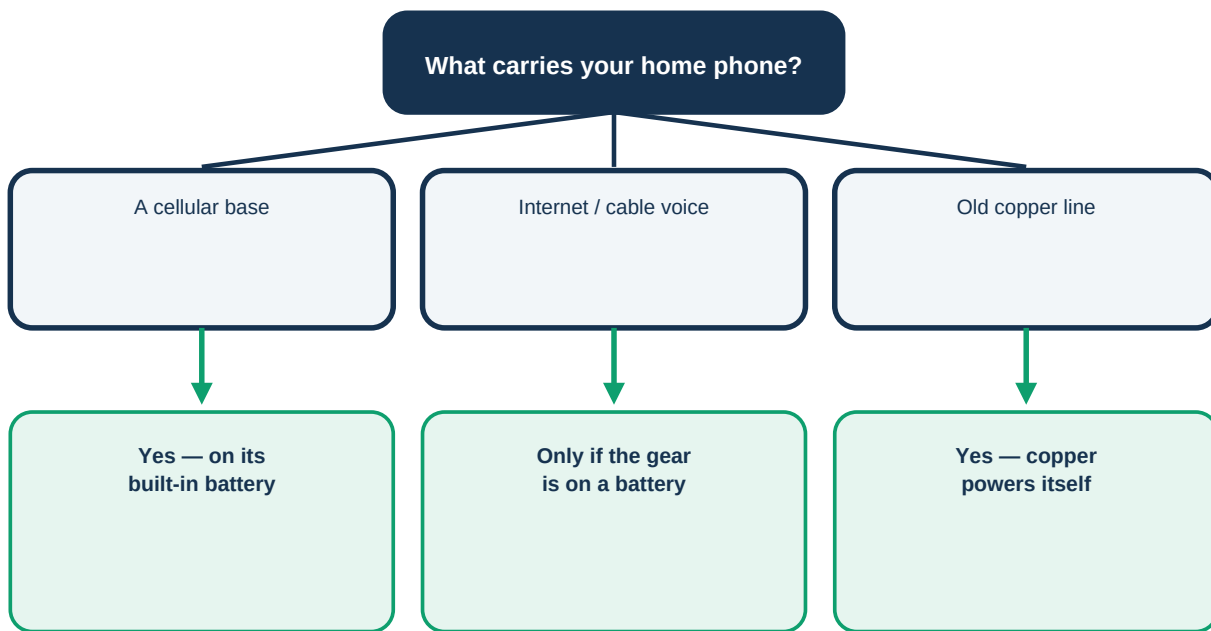
Keep this by the phone. I want to... Do this. Know if my phone survives an outage — a cellular base does (it has a battery); an internet or cable phone does NOT unless its gear is on a battery. Keep an internet phone alive — put the WHOLE chain (modem, router, phone box) on a battery backup, not just one piece. Keep the internet itself up — ask about cellular failover, or use a cellular base that doesn't need internet. Always have a backstop — keep a charged cell phone ready; it's the final way to reach 911. Know it works — test the backup a couple of times a year and before storm season. Get help — call Bill: (330) 200-8042.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Will My Phone Work in an Outage?

Follow the branches to your honest answer



No matter which, keep a charged cell phone as your final 911 backup.

A general picture — confirm your own gear and backup with your provider.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Each Phone Type in an Outage

Works without power? Needs internet? At a glance

	Works in outage?	Needs internet?
Old copper line	Yes	No
Cable / internet voice	Only with battery	Yes
Home VoIP adapter	Only with battery	Yes
Cellular home base	Yes — has battery	No — uses cell
Charged cell phone	Yes — own battery	No — uses cell

No single best — the right fit depends on your home and your outages.

BEFORE YOU GO

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 results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: **billshometech.com/book** · **bill@billshometech.com**

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.