



An Extended Guide · No. 1262

Maintenance & Seasonal Care

A little care keeps it ready

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Hello, and welcome

A generator is one of those things you buy hoping you'll hardly need it — and then, one icy Ohio night, it's the most important machine you own. The secret to it starting on that night is a little easy care along the way, and this guide walks you through all of it in plain English.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent more than 30 years helping folks get comfortable with their technology — patiently, in plain language, and at their own pace. Think of this guide as me sitting at your kitchen table, walking through it with you one step at a time.

We'll cover the whole simple rhythm: checking and changing the oil, keeping the air filter and spark plug happy, keeping the fuel fresh so it doesn't gum up, running the unit now and then so it stays limber, caring for the battery on electric-start models, and putting it away clean between storms. None of it is hard, and I'll show you how it differs a little whether you're in town using it for the odd storm or out in the country leaning on it hard.

You do not have to read this all at once, and you certainly don't have to memorize it. Skip to whatever you need, keep it handy, and know that a real person is only a phone call away.

★ How to use this guide

Each page stands on its own. Read one, take what's useful, and come back for the next when you're ready. If a step ever feels fuzzy, that's on my writing — not on you — and you can always call me at (330) 200-8042.

It's really just like caring for a lawn mower

Here's the reassuring truth to start with: a generator asks for the very same easy, occasional care as the mower in your garage. If you can keep a mower running, you can keep a generator ready.

Under the hood, a portable generator is a small gasoline engine — a close cousin of your lawn mower, your snowblower, and your string trimmer. And like all of them, it wants the same short list of things to stay happy: fresh fuel, clean oil, a clean air filter, a good spark plug, and a run now and then to keep everything limber. That's the whole list. Nothing on it needs a mechanic or a single specialized tool.

There's one important difference, and it's not about the machine — it's about the moment. A mower that won't start on a Saturday in July is an annoyance you can deal with next week. A generator that won't start during a February ice storm, with the furnace cold and the food warming up, is a real problem with no easy fix. So we give a generator the same simple care, just a little more faithfully, so it's ready the day you truly need it.

That's the spirit of this whole guide. A few minutes here and there, most of it things you already half-know from the mower, and your generator will start the moment you ask it to. Let's walk through each piece so none of it is a mystery.

✓ The whole secret in one sentence

Keep fresh fuel in it, check the oil, and run it now and then. Do just those three things and you've handled the large majority of generator care. Everything else in this guide is simply doing those three well, plus an occasional look at the filter and plug.

The whole schedule on one page

Before we dig into each job, here's the entire maintenance rhythm at a glance, so you can see for yourself that there really isn't much to it. We'll take these one at a time in the pages that follow.

- **Before every use** — check the oil level and give the unit a quick look-over. Thirty seconds.
- **Once, when it's new** — do the break-in oil change after the first few hours of running, if your manual calls for one.
- **About once a month** — run it 15 to 20 minutes under a light load so it stays ready and dry inside.
- **Every 100 run-hours or so** — change the oil (or sooner if the manual says, and at least once a year regardless).
- **Each season, or as the manual says** — clean or replace the air filter, check the spark plug, and refresh the fuel.

That's the whole thing. Most of these are quick, most are occasional, and the two that matter most for a unit that mostly sits — the monthly run and keeping the fuel fresh — are the easiest of all. There's a one-page picture of this schedule in the diagrams at the front to tape up wherever you keep the unit.

✓ There are really two clocks

A generator runs on two clocks at once — running hours and the calendar. A storm-only unit may go a whole year without piling up 100 hours, so its oil change is driven by the calendar; a hard-working one hits the hour marks fast. Watch whichever comes first, and you'll never be caught out.

Oil: check it every single time

If you take just one habit from this guide, let it be this one. Oil is the lifeblood of the engine, and checking it is the single most important thing you'll ever do — thirty seconds that can save the whole machine.

Oil keeps all the fast-moving metal parts inside the engine slippery and cool. Let the oil run low, or run the engine dry, and those parts grind against each other and can ruin the engine in minutes — a repair that often costs more than the generator. That's why we check first, every time. One important note for a brand-new unit: most ship with **no oil in them at all**, so you must fill it to the mark before the very first start.

Checking is easy. With the engine cool and the unit on level ground, pull the dipstick or open the oil fill, wipe it clean, put it back and pull it again, and read where the oil sits. Top it up to the mark with the oil weight your manual calls for — never above the mark. Many inverter units have a low-oil shutoff that stops the engine to protect it, which is a wonderful safety net, but don't lean on it. Check the level yourself.

There's one special early step. A brand-new engine sheds tiny metal particles as its parts wear smoothly together, so most makers want an early **break-in oil change** after just the first few hours of running — check your manual for the exact hour. That first change flushes those particles out, and it's cheap insurance for a long, healthy life. Do it, then settle into the regular routine on the next page.

! Don't overfill, and check it level

More oil is not better — fill only to the mark. Overfilling can make the engine smoke, run poorly, and start hard. And always check on level ground with the engine cool, or you'll get a false reading and chase a problem that isn't there.

Changing the oil: how often, and which kind

After that early break-in change, oil settles into an easy routine. Change it on a simple schedule and the engine will return the favor for many years.

How often? A good general rule is to change the oil roughly every **100 run-hours**, or whatever interval your manual gives — and at least **once a year** even if you haven't run it that much, because oil slowly ages and picks up moisture just sitting. For a storm-only generator that rarely reaches 100 hours, that once-a-year change is usually the one that counts.

Which oil? Use the **weight** your manual specifies — that's the number like the one printed on a bottle of small-engine or car oil — and don't substitute. Here's a cold-weather wrinkle worth knowing, since a winter storm is exactly when you'll want it to start: oil gets thick and sluggish in the cold, so many manuals call for a **thinner grade for winter running** so it flows freely on a frigid morning. Check yours before storm season and switch if it tells you to.

The change itself is a ten-minute job, just like the mower. Run the engine a couple of minutes so the oil is warm and flows out cleanly, shut it off, drain the old oil into a pan, refill to the mark with fresh oil, and you're done. Pour the used oil into a jug and drop it at any auto-parts store that recycles it — most do, for free. Never pour it on the ground or in the trash.

✓ Keep a quart on the shelf

Keep a bottle or two of the right oil right next to the generator, so a check that comes up low, or an oil change that comes due, is never a reason to stop and drive to the store. A thinner grade for winter belongs on that shelf too.

The air filter: let it breathe

An engine needs clean air just as much as it needs clean fuel, and the air filter is the little screen or foam pad that keeps the dust out. Keeping it clean is simple, and it makes a real difference in how the unit runs.

As the engine runs, it breathes in a surprising amount of air, and the filter strains the dirt and dust out of it first. Let that filter clog up with grime and the engine starts to gasp — it runs rough, wastes fuel, loses power, and gets harder to start. A clean filter fixes all of that for pennies.

You'll find it behind a small snap-off or screw-off cover, usually a pad of foam or a pleated paper element. Care depends on the kind: a **foam** filter can often be washed in warm, soapy water, squeezed dry, and lightly re-oiled if the manual says so; a **paper** element is usually tapped clean of loose dust and simply replaced when it's dirty. Clean or replace it on the manual's schedule, and more often if you run in dusty places.

How fast it dirties depends entirely on where you use it. A unit that lives in a clean garage and comes out for the odd storm stays clean a long time. One that runs near a gravel drive, out in a field, in a barn, or on a dusty jobsite will load up its filter far faster and wants checking more often.

✓ A two-minute peek during your monthly run

When you do your monthly run, pop the filter cover and take a look. If it's gray, matted, and grimy, clean it or swap in a fresh one. Keep a spare filter on the shelf — they cost very little and turn a dirty filter into a one-minute fix.

The spark plug: the little spark that starts it all

The spark plug is the small part that lights the fuel and gets the engine running. It quietly does its job for a long time and asks for almost nothing — just an occasional look.

Every time the engine fires, the spark plug throws the tiny spark that lights the fuel. Over a lot of running, deposits build up on its tip and the little gap at the end slowly widens, and a tired plug makes the engine harder to start and rougher to run. The good news is that this is a slow, once-in-a-while concern, not a monthly chore.

Caring for it is simple: **inspect it per the manual**. On the schedule your manual gives, or if the unit ever starts hard, you unscrew the plug and take a look. A plug that's sooty or worn can be cleaned, but since a new one costs only a dollar or two, most folks just replace it and be done. Your manual lists the exact plug and the exact gap for your engine — that's the part to get right, so match it.

Here's a handy thing to file away: if your generator ever cranks and cranks but is slow to catch, and you've already confirmed fresh fuel and good oil, a fresh spark plug is a common, cheap, five-minute cure. It's one of the first things a repair shop would check, and one you can easily handle yourself.

★ Keep a spare plug in the drawer

For a couple of dollars, a spare correct plug tucked in a drawer means a hard-starting generator is a five-minute fix instead of a trip to the store in the middle of a storm. I'm glad to show you how to check it and swap it — call (330) 200-8042.

Stale fuel: the number-one reason they won't start

If a generator refuses to start when the storm finally hits, the culprit is almost always the same single thing — old gasoline that turned to gum. This one page prevents the most common heartbreak there is.

Gasoline does not keep. It goes stale in a matter of months, and today's gas — most of it blended with some ethanol — actually draws in moisture as it ages and leaves behind a sticky varnish. That varnish clogs the hair-thin passages inside the **carburetor**, the part that mixes fuel and air. A gummed-up carburetor is why a stored generator cranks over but won't catch — and it, far more than any worn-out engine, is what kills most generators that sit.

The fixes are easy and cheap. **Use fresh fuel** — don't let gas sit in the tank for months on end. **Add fuel stabilizer** if the fuel will sit more than about a month; it's an inexpensive splash that keeps gasoline fresh far longer. **Rotate your supply** by pouring older gas into the car and refilling with fresh. And before you put the unit away for a long stretch, either fill it with stabilized fuel or **run the carburetor dry** the way your manual describes, so no fuel is left inside to turn to varnish.

A couple of other notes. Some owners buy **ethanol-free** gas for stored equipment, since it stores a bit better; check what your manual allows. And if your unit runs on **propane**, that sidesteps this whole problem — propane stores for years without going stale, which is one reason many folks like it for a generator that mostly waits for emergencies.

! Never store it with old gas in the carburetor

This is the mistake that ruins more generators than everything else combined. Either keep the fuel fresh and stabilized, or run the carburetor dry for storage as your manual describes. A gummed carburetor can mean a repair bill for a machine that was working perfectly the last time you used it.

Run it once a month — it likes the exercise

The single kindest thing you can do for a generator is simply to run it now and then. Engines don't like sitting idle for months; a short monthly run keeps everything limber and proves the unit is ready.

About once a month, start it up and let it run for **15 to 20 minutes with a light load plugged in** — a lamp or two, a fan, or a work light will do. Running it under a little load like that is better for it than letting it idle with nothing attached. That's the whole exercise: a quarter of an hour, once a month.

That short run does a surprising amount of good. It circulates fresh fuel through the lines and carburetor so nothing sits and gums up. It keeps the battery charged on electric-start units. It warms the engine and drives off the moisture that quietly builds up inside a cold, still machine. And most valuable of all, it proves to you — on a calm, unhurried day — that the thing actually starts and runs, long before you'd stake a freezer of food or a cold house on it.

That last point is the real gift. If your generator is going to have a problem, you want to discover it on a quiet Saturday when the stores are open and there's no pressure, not at nine o'clock on the night an ice storm takes the power. A monthly run turns that dreaded moment into a non-event. And, as the safety page will stress, every one of these runs happens **outside**.

✓ Tie it to something you already do

Pick an easy anchor you won't forget — the first Saturday of the month, the day you pay a certain bill, or when you test the smoke alarms — and give the generator its fifteen minutes then. Moisture and stale fuel are what hurt a sitting generator, and a faithful monthly run beats them both.

If it has an electric start, mind the battery

Many units start with the push of a button or the turn of a key instead of a pull cord — a real gift for anyone whose shoulders aren't what they once were. That convenience runs on a small battery that needs a little care of its own.

The battery inside an electric-start generator is much like a small lawn-tractor battery. And like every battery, it slowly goes flat while it sits, even when nothing is using it. If it drains all the way down, the electric start won't crank — though it's worth knowing that most units keep a **pull cord as a backup**, so a dead battery leaves you inconvenienced, not stranded.

Keeping it ready is simple. Your monthly run helps recharge the battery each time. Better still, for a unit that mostly sits between storms, hook up a **battery tender** — also called a trickle charger or a battery maintainer. It's an inexpensive little device that plugs into a wall outlet and keeps the battery topped up perfectly without ever overcharging it. Leave it connected between uses and the battery is always at full strength, ready to spin the engine over on the first try.

This matters most in the cold. Batteries are weaker in winter, and winter is exactly when the ice storms come and you'll be reaching for that start button. A battery kept full by a tender, paired with the thinner cold-weather oil we talked about, is what makes for an easy start on a bitter morning.

✓ A battery tender is cheap insurance

For the cost of a nice dinner out, a battery maintainer means your push-button start simply always works. Keep the pull cord in mind as your backup, and I'm happy to help you pick a tender and hook it up so it's one less thing to think about.

Keep it clean, and keep it covered

A generator lives a rough-and-tumble life — hauled out in the worst weather, then parked in the garage or shed for months. A quick wipe-down and a good cover keep it looking and running its best.

Keeping it clean takes only a rag. Wipe off the dust, grass clippings, cobwebs, and any spilled fuel. Keep the cooling vents and air openings clear so the engine doesn't overheat. And glance it over while you're at it — a clean machine is an easy machine to inspect, so you'll spot a weeping oil leak, a loose bolt, or a mouse nest that moved in over the winter before any of them becomes a problem.

Between uses, store it under a **cover** in a dry spot like a garage or shed, to keep dust, damp, and critters out of the works. (Store your fuel safely and separately — there's a whole guide on that in this series.) A snug cover on a shelf-kept unit is the simplest way to have it come out clean and ready next time, instead of dusty and full of spiderwebs.

There's one rule about covers that is not about tidiness at all — it's about your life, so read it twice. A storage cover goes on a generator that is **off and cool**. You must **never** drape a cover, a tarp, or anything else over a generator while it is running. It traps heat and deadly exhaust, and it is both a fire and a carbon-monoxide danger.

! A cover is for a resting generator, never a running one

Covering a running generator traps its heat and its deadly exhaust right where you don't want them. Store it covered only when it's cool and switched off. If you need to keep rain off while it runs, use only a proper open, vented generator canopy made for that purpose, out in the open air — never a tarp, and never inside any enclosure.

Keep a simple log — your memory will thank you

You don't need anything fancy to stay on top of all this. A scrap of paper taped inside the generator's cover, or an index card in a drawer, is plenty. Writing it down beats trying to remember every time.

The tricky thing about once-in-a-while jobs is remembering when you last did them. Was that oil change last fall, or the fall before? Did you run it this month or skip it? A simple log ends the guessing. Each time you touch the generator, jot down the date and a word or two about what you did.

You barely need any detail. A few entries tell the whole story:

- **The date** — so you can count forward to the next oil change or backward to your last run.
- **What you did** — "changed oil," "new air filter," "ran 15 min," "added stabilizer," "new plug."
- **The running hours**, roughly — if your unit has an hour meter, note the number; if not, a rough tally still tells you when you're nearing that 100-hour oil change.

That's it. At a glance you'll know when the oil is due, whether you've run it lately, and about how many hours are on the engine. A log also helps if you ever sell the unit or need it serviced, and it turns a vague worry into a simple, answered question. Keep it right with the machine so it's always at hand.

✓ Tape it right to the machine

An index card in a small zip bag, taped inside the generator's storage cover, never gets lost and never gets rained on. One line per entry is all it takes, and you'll never again stand there wondering when you last changed the oil.

When in doubt, the manual is the boss

Everything in this guide is the general rhythm that fits nearly every inverter generator. But your particular unit came with an owner's manual, and on the exact numbers, the manual always wins.

These machines all share the same basic needs, but the fine details vary from model to model: the exact oil weight and how much the engine holds, the precise break-in hour and oil-change interval, the right spark plug and its gap, how to clean or replace that specific filter, and how the maker wants you to store it for the season. Your manual spells all of that out for your unit, and no general guide can.

So use the two together. Let this guide give you the **why** and the overall rhythm — what oil does, why fuel goes stale, how often things generally come due — and let the manual give you the exact **how** and **when** for your machine. Read together like that, you'll understand what you're doing and do it right.

Lost your manual? Don't fret. Nearly every maker posts them free online as a PDF — search the brand and the model number, which you'll find on a label right on the unit. Print a fresh copy and keep it with the machine, or with this guide in the drawer. And if the manual reads like a foreign language, that's exactly the sort of thing I'm here to help translate.

★ Bring me the manual and we'll decode it together

If your owner's manual might as well be written in code, don't let that stop you. Have it handy during a visit and I'll turn it into a simple, written routine for your exact unit — oil weight, filter, plug, and all — so you know precisely what to do and when. Just call (330) 200-8042.

If you live in town: city and suburb

Most of my customers here in town — in Kent, Ravenna, Streetsboro, and Aurora — buy a generator for one reason: the occasional storm. It sits quietly in the garage most of the year and earns its keep just a few days out of it. That "mostly sitting" is the whole key to how you care for it.

Because a storm-only generator may go many months — even a whole year — without running enough to reach that 100-hour oil mark, your care is driven far more by the **calendar** than by the hours. The two habits that matter most for a unit that mostly waits are the monthly run and keeping the fuel fresh. Nearly everything else is just an occasional look.

The monthly run matters even more for you than for someone who uses theirs hard, precisely because your machine sits so much. A generator that hasn't been started since last winter is exactly the one that won't start this winter — stale fuel and moisture do their quiet damage while it waits in the dark. Fifteen minutes a month is what stands between "it fired right up" and a cold, dark house full of worry.

So keep your town routine simple: fresh, stabilized fuel; a quick oil check before each use and a full oil change at least once a year even though the hours stay low; a monthly run under a light load; and a clean cover over it in between. In a close neighborhood, set it in the driveway well away from everyone's windows and run it in eco mode to keep the peace.

✓ The calendar is your maintenance clock

For a storm-only generator, don't sit waiting to reach 100 hours — you may never get there. Change the oil once a year, keep the fuel fresh and stabilized, and run it monthly. Tie each to a date you won't forget, and you're covered.

If you're in the country on a well

Out in the townships — Atwater, Rootstown, Deerfield, and Palmyra — a generator often works a good deal harder. On a well it may run for hours or even days each time the power quits, to keep water flowing, and plenty of country folks lean on one for the barn, the shop, or a hunting camp besides. Heavier use changes the care it needs.

The more hours a generator runs, the sooner it reaches every maintenance mark — so a hard-working country unit needs its **oil and air filter watched much more closely** than a town unit that only sees the odd storm. Check the oil before each long run, and actually track the hours in your log, because you'll reach that 100-hour oil change in a season or two of real use, not in a decade.

Dust is the other country factor. Running near a gravel drive, a barn, an open field, or a dusty shop loads the air filter far faster than the manual's easy-life schedule assumes. Check it often during heavy use and clean or replace it more frequently — a choked filter makes the engine strain and drink extra fuel just when you can least spare it.

There's a well-water reality worth naming plainly here too. On a well, no generator means no water, which is all the more reason to keep a well-backup unit faithfully maintained — the day the pump won't run is not the day to discover stale fuel. And remember that only a larger 120/240-volt unit sized to your pump can actually run it; a small suitcase unit can't. Whichever you have, it takes the same oil, filter, plug, and fuel care — there's just more of it, because it works harder.

✓ Stock the shelf before the season

Out where the store is a real drive and outages seem to come in threes, keep spares on hand: the right oil, a spare air filter, a spare spark plug, fresh fuel, and a bottle of stabilizer. Buy it all on a calm day so you're never doing without in the middle of a storm. Bring me your unit and I'll write you the exact list: (330) 200-8042.

The safety talk: carbon monoxide

You'll test-start and exercise this generator many times over its life — a few minutes here, fifteen minutes there — and every one of those runs must happen outside. It's easy to get lax about a "quick" maintenance start in the garage, so this page is the one rule that never bends.

Every generator that burns gasoline or propane makes carbon monoxide, or "CO" — a gas you cannot see or smell. It is the one real danger with a generator, and it is completely avoidable. More people are hurt by running a generator in the wrong place than by anything else, so please read this page twice.

Outside only — no exceptions

Never run a generator indoors, and that includes the garage, the basement, a shed, a carport, or a covered porch — even with the door up or a window open. CO pools and seeps into the house. The only safe place is outdoors, in the open air.

At least 20 feet away, exhaust pointed away

Set the generator at least 20 feet from the house, and turn it so the exhaust blows **away** from any door, window, or vent. Don't tuck it against the wall to hide it or keep it dry — give it room to breathe and let the fumes drift off.

Alarms are your safety net

Put working carbon-monoxide alarms on every level of your home and near the bedrooms, and use ones with a battery backup so they work when the power is out. Test them now, before storm season, not during it.

A little shelf of supplies keeps you ready

Half of easy maintenance is simply having the right odds and ends on hand before you need them. None of it is expensive, and a small shelf of supplies turns most jobs into a five-minute fix instead of a scramble.

Set aside a spot near the generator — a shelf, a bin, a corner of the workbench — and stock it on a calm afternoon with the everyday things generator care calls for:

- **The right oil** — a quart or two of the weight your manual specifies, plus a thinner grade if you run it in deep cold.
- **An oil-change kit** — a funnel, a drain pan, a rag, and a jug to carry the used oil off to a recycler.
- **A spare air filter** — and cleaning supplies too, if yours is the washable foam kind.
- **A spare spark plug** — the exact one your manual lists — and the little wrench to change it.
- **Fresh fuel and stabilizer** — kept in an approved, clearly marked fuel can (the fuel-storage guide covers doing this safely).
- **Good heavy-duty outdoor cords** — checked over for nicks and cracks — plus a battery tender if your unit has electric start.
- **A flashlight or headlamp and work gloves** — because outages and the chores they bring have a way of happening after dark.

With that little kit on the shelf, a dirty filter or a fouled plug is a quick swap, not a helpless wait — and you're never counting on a store that may be closed or sold out once a storm has everyone else thinking the same thing you are.

✓ Shop before the storm, not during it

The very worst time to need a part is in the middle of an outage, when the stores are dark or picked clean. A small kit bought ahead is real peace of mind for just a few dollars. I'm glad to write you a simple shopping list for your exact unit.

Seasonal care, season by season

Ohio hands us all four seasons, and a generator's needs shift a little with them. Here's the easy yearly rhythm laid out, so nothing sneaks up on you.

Fall, before storm season, is your one big appointment of the year. Change the oil, clean or replace the air filter, check the spark plug, top up with fresh stabilized fuel, and give it a good long test run. If your manual calls for a thinner oil for winter, switch to it now. The whole idea is to get it storm-ready before the first ice hits, not scrambling during it.

Winter is outage season here, so keep it exercised each month and the fuel fresh. Cold makes for harder starts, so this is when a battery kept full by a tender and the right thin oil earn their keep. Before a storm, clear the snow from the spot where you'll set it up, a good 20 feet out from the house.

Spring is a good time to look it over after a hard winter of use or a long sit: change the oil, check the filter and plug again, and see whether anything suffered in the cold. And **summer** brings its own thunderstorms and heat, so keep it ready, keep the cooling vents clear so it doesn't overheat on a hot day, and keep up that monthly run right through the warm months.

Boiled all the way down, the year is simply this: one big check-up in the fall, a fifteen-minute run every month, and another quick look in the spring. That's a rhythm anyone can keep.

✓ Fall is your one big appointment

If you put nothing else on a schedule, make a standing fall date to get the generator storm-ready — fresh oil, a clean filter, fresh stabilized fuel, and a good test run. Do that one seasonal check-up and everything else is small.

Putting it all together: your easy routine

Set out plainly, the whole of generator care fits into a rhythm you can hold in your head — a little each month, a bit each fall, and a quick check before every use. Here it is, start to finish, on one page.

- **Before every use** — check the oil, glance it over for leaks or loose parts, and set it outside, 20 feet from the house.
- **Once, when it's new** — do the break-in oil change after the first few hours of running, if the manual calls for one.
- **Every month** — run it 15 to 20 minutes outside under a light load, glance at the filter and fuel, and note it in your log.
- **Every 100 run-hours, or at least yearly** — change the oil with the weight your manual specifies.
- **Each season, or per the manual** — clean or replace the air filter, check the spark plug, and refresh the fuel and stabilizer.
- **Between uses** — keep fresh stabilized fuel (or store it dry), a battery tender on electric-start units, and a clean cover over a cool, off machine.

That is the entire job, beginning to end. Print it out, tape it inside the generator's cover, and you never again have to carry any of it around in your memory — you just glance at the list and do the next thing that's due.

★ Let me set up your routine for you

If you'd like, I'll come out, look over your unit, and write all of this into a simple one-page routine tailored to your exact generator — then walk you through each step once so you've done it with your own hands. After that it's second nature. Call (330) 200-8042.

How I can help

Keeping a generator ready is exactly the kind of small, ongoing help I love giving folks around Portage County — the sort of thing that's easy once someone shows you, and easy to put off until it's too late.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech right here in Portage County. I'm a tech-help person, not a power company and not a pushy salesman — I help folks pick the right gear, set it up, and feel confident using it. With generators, that means helping you choose a unit that fits your home and your budget, showing you how to run it safely, and getting your internet, TV, and devices happily back on once the power's flowing.

The care in this guide — oil, filter, plug, fuel, and a monthly run — is all homeowner-friendly, and I'm glad to teach you every bit of it. The one place I bring in a licensed electrician is anything tied into your home's wiring, like a transfer switch for a well pump; that's not a maintenance job, but if yours is wired in that way, I'll coordinate the pro and handle the rest for you.

Three easy ways to get help

- **An in-home visit** — a flat \$99 first visit. I come to you, here in Portage County, and every visit is 30-day come-back-free.
- **Remote help** — a flat \$49 screen-share, up to two hours, for the things I can sort out without coming over (it's free for Support Plan members).
- **A Support Plan** — \$39 a month for folks who'd like me on call all year.

Your simple maintenance checklist

Tear this page out and tape it inside the generator's cover or a cabinet door. A few check marks are what keep it ready for the day you truly need it.

- ☐ Oil checked and topped to the mark (and the break-in change done, if the unit is new).
- ☐ Fresh fuel in it, with stabilizer added if it will sit over a month.
- ☐ Air filter checked — cleaned, or a spare waiting on the shelf.
- ☐ A spare spark plug and the right oil in your supply kit.
- ☐ You've run it 15 to 20 minutes in the last month, outside, under a light load.
- ☐ A battery tender on it, if it has electric start.
- ☐ Stored clean and covered — cover only ever on a cool, off machine.
- ☐ A simple maintenance log started and kept with the machine.
- ☐ Your owner's manual on hand (or freshly printed from online).
- ☐ Working carbon-monoxide alarms inside, with fresh batteries.

Ten small check marks, and your generator is far more likely to start the very moment the lights go out. That's the whole point of all of it.

The short version

If you remember nothing else from this guide, remember these:

- Care for it like a lawn mower: fresh fuel, clean oil, a clean filter, a good spark plug, and a run now and then.
- Check the oil before every use; do the break-in change early, then change it about every 100 run-hours or per the manual, at least yearly.
- Stale fuel is the number-one reason they won't start — use fresh gas, add stabilizer, and never store it with old gas gumming the carburetor.
- Run it 15 to 20 minutes a month, outside, under a light load — it drives off moisture and proves it will start when you need it.
- Your manual has the exact numbers, and I'm a phone call away to set up an easy routine that fits how you use yours.

Your Maintenance at a Glance

A little care keeps it ready

	The job	Keep in mind
Before every use	Check the oil	Top to the mark
First few hours	Break-in change	One time, early
About monthly	Run 15-20 min	Under a light load
Every 100 hours	Change the oil	Or per the manual
Each season	Filter, plug, fuel	Fresh, stabilized

A general rhythm - your owner's manual is always the final word.

A Simple Monthly Check

Fifteen quiet minutes keeps it ready



A quarter hour a month proves it will start when the storm comes.

Cared For vs. Left to Sit

The difference a few minutes a month makes

	Cared for	Left to sit
Oil	Clean and full	Low or run dry
Fuel	Fresh, stabilized	Stale and gummy
Starting	Fires right up	Cranks, won't go
When you need it	Ready to go	A costly no-start

A ready generator or a dead one - the difference is a little care.

What Care Does Yours Need?

Match the care to how you use it

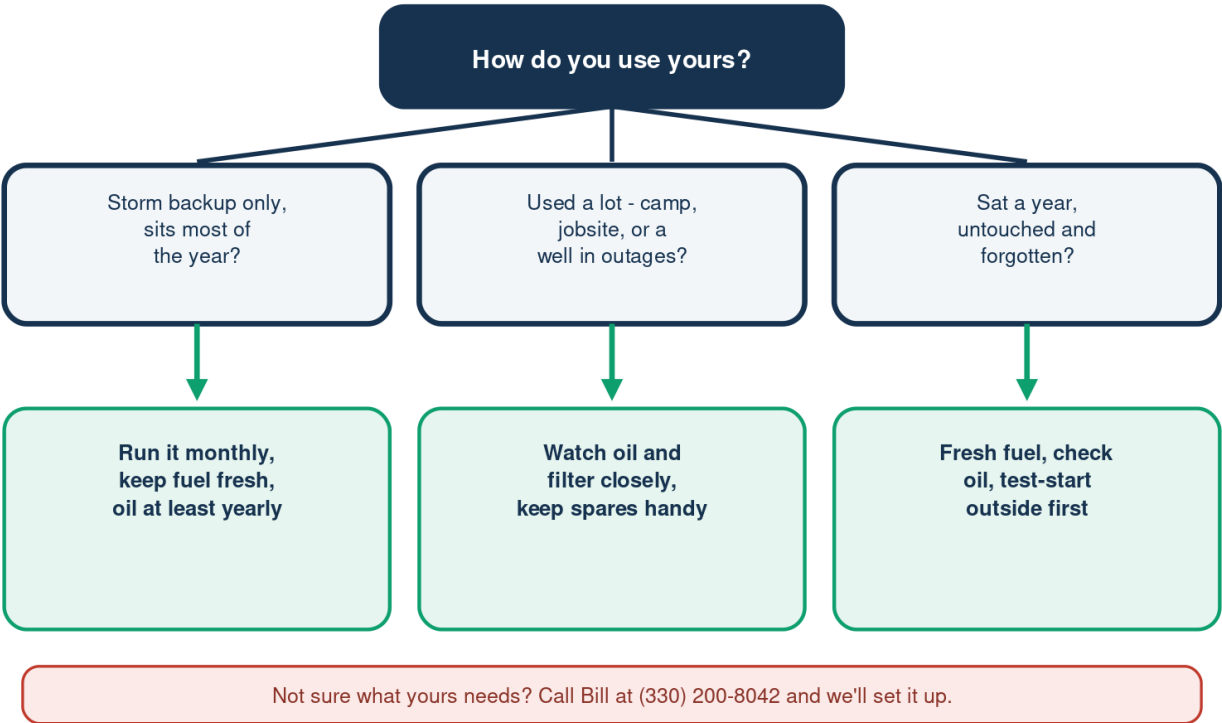


Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.



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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

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