



An Extended Guide · No. 1883

Keeping a Robot Mower from Being Stolen — PINs, Alarms & Tracking

Make it not worth taking,
and easy to get back

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Let's make your mower not worth stealing

A robot mower spends hours a day out in the open, often in plain view of the street, worth a good bit of money and small enough to carry off. That's a fair thing to worry about — and there's a lot you can do about it without turning your yard into a fortress.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent 30+ years helping folks get comfortable with the gear in their homes and yards, patiently and in plain language. Think of this as me at your kitchen table, walking you through it one step at a time.

Here's the honest truth up front: a determined thief with a truck can take almost anything. We can't make that impossible. What we can do is make your mower a bad target — hard to use once it's gone, noisy when grabbed, and trackable so the police have something to work with. That combination turns most would-be thieves toward an easier yard.

★ A quick look beats a lot of worry

If you'd like a hand turning on your mower's theft features and thinking through where the base should live, that's exactly the kind of thing I do on a visit. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, your mower is already a far worse target than your neighbor's.

- ❑ Turn on the PIN lock so it won't run for anyone without your code.
- ❑ Turn on the lift alarm so it shrieks the moment it's picked up.
- ❑ Turn on GPS tracking and the geofence so you get an alert if it leaves the yard.
- ❑ Set the 'installation lock' so it only works at your base station.
- ❑ Hide or anchor the base out of street view, record the serial number, and register the mower with the maker.
- ❑ A small, discreet tracker tucked inside is cheap recovery insurance.

✓ One idea to hold onto

You don't have to stop every thief — just be a worse target than the next yard. A locked, alarmed, trackable mower isn't worth the trouble to most folks who'd grab an easy one.

Why these machines get taken at all

Understanding what makes a robot mower tempting helps you take the temptation away. It comes down to three things.

- **They're valuable.** A good robot mower is worth real money, and the fancier wire-free models cost several times what a basic one does.
- **They're portable.** One person can pick most of them up and walk off — no tools, no fuss.
- **They're out in the open.** Unlike a car or a snowblower, your mower works for hours unattended, sometimes within easy reach of the street.

The good news is that makers know all this, so modern mowers come with theft features built right in. Most of this guide is simply about switching those on — and adding a few cheap, common-sense steps on top.

✓ Thieves want easy and quiet

Almost everything that follows works by making your mower either useless, loud, or traceable. Any one of those gives a thief a reason to move on; together they're a strong deterrent.

The PIN lock — your first and best defense

Nearly every robot mower lets you set a PIN — a short code, like the one on your phone — that must be entered before it will run. Turn this on first. It's the single most effective thing you can do.

With a PIN set, a stolen mower is a brick. It won't start a job, it won't leave its base, and often it can't even be set up fresh without your code. A thief ends up with an expensive doorstop they can't use or easily resell — and word gets around that a given brand is locked down.

Pick a code you'll remember but that isn't obvious — not 1234, not your house number. Write it down somewhere safe at home, the same place you keep the manual, so you're never locked out of your own mower.

★ I'll set the PIN so you won't forget it

Setting a PIN takes two minutes in the app, and I'll make sure it's written down somewhere you'll find it. If you've got a mower and never turned this on, it's worth a quick call. (330) 200-8042.

The alarm that goes off when it's lifted

The second built-in trick is a loud alarm that sounds the instant the mower is picked up or carried off its path. It's startling on purpose.

A thief expects a quiet grab-and-go. A mower that suddenly screams in their hands is the opposite of quiet — it draws eyes, it rattles nerves, and it often ends with the mower dropped right where it was. Paired with the PIN lock, the alarm usually keeps blaring until your code is entered.

You'll want to test the alarm once when you set it up, so you know how loud it really is and so it doesn't surprise you the first time you lift the mower yourself to clean it. Lift it, let it sound, then enter your PIN to hush it.

! Turn it off before you clean, not with your hands full

The alarm is loud by design. Before you flip the mower over to clean the underside, put it in the right mode or enter your PIN first — you don't want it shrieking while you're wrestling it over near the blades.

GPS tracking and the invisible fence

Many mowers — especially the wire-free kind that already use satellite positioning to find the lawn — can track their own location and warn you if they wander off your property.

A geofence is simply an invisible boundary you set in the app around your yard. If the mower ever crosses it — because someone carried it to a car — the app pings your phone right away. Some mowers will also show you roughly where they are on a map, which is exactly what the police want.

Be honest with yourself about the limits: tracking usually needs the mower powered on and able to reach a signal, and a clever thief might pull the battery. That's why tracking is one layer, not the whole wall — it pairs best with a PIN lock and a separate hidden tracker.

✓ An alert is only useful if you see it

Turn on notifications for your mower's app and keep your phone's alerts on. A geofence warning that sits unseen in a silenced app can't help you catch a mower on its way out the driveway.

Locking the mower to its own base

A quieter built-in feature, sometimes called an 'installation lock,' ties the mower to the specific base station and setup in your yard.

The idea is simple: the mower only works at home. Carry it to a different yard and it won't recognize its base, its map, or its boundary, so it refuses to do its job. Combined with the PIN, it means a stolen mower can't just be plunked down on someone else's lawn and put to work.

You usually set this once during setup and then forget about it. It won't stop someone from picking the mower up, but it's one more reason the machine is worthless to them the moment it leaves your grass.

✓ Layers, not a single lock

No one feature is a magic shield. The PIN, the alarm, the tracking, and the install lock each close a different door. A thief has to beat all of them, and most won't bother.

Put the base where thieves won't look

The base station is where your mower sleeps most of the day. Where you put it matters as much as any app setting.

Tuck the base out of direct view from the street — along the side of the house, behind a shrub, or in a back corner of the yard. A mower parked in plain sight by the sidewalk is an advertisement; one that a passerby never notices is simply not on anyone's list.

You can also anchor the base down. Many stake into the ground with long pegs, and some folks add longer ground anchors or screw the base to a small paver or block so it can't be scooped up in one grab. It won't stop a cut and run, but it slows a casual thief and buys the alarm time to work.

★ Not a licensed landscaper — but I'll help you plan it

I can help you pick a spot that keeps the base hidden and still lets the mower reach the whole lawn (and, on satellite models, keep a clear view of the sky). If anchoring means real digging, I'll line up a trustworthy local pro. Call (330) 200-8042.

Make it recoverable, not just protected

If the worst happens, these three cheap habits are what get a mower back — or at least make an insurance claim easy.

Record the serial number

Write down or photograph the serial number and model, and keep it with your other home papers. Police and insurers both ask for it, and a serial is how a recovered mower gets matched back to you.

Register with the maker

Registering ties the mower to your name and can flag it if a thief ever contacts support to unlock or re-register it. It also keeps your warranty and app account in order.

Add a discreet tracker

A small, inexpensive tracker tucked out of sight inside the mower is quiet recovery insurance — independent of the mower's own battery and features, so it keeps working even if a thief powers the machine down.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

How much you need to fuss depends a lot on where you live and who can see your mower. Picture your own yard and street as you read.

A visible in-town lot

If your mower works a front or side yard that the street, the sidewalk, or a shared drive can see, visibility is your main risk — so lean hard on making it useless and loud if grabbed.

- Turn on every built-in feature: PIN, alarm, tracking, install lock.
- Move the base out of street view, even if the cord run is longer.
- Add a hidden tracker — a busy street means a quick grab is possible.
- Schedule mowing for when you're home or likely to hear the alarm.

A tucked-away rural lot

If you're on a few acres set back from the road, a casual snatch is less likely — but a quiet, unseen yard also means no one's around to notice, so recovery and anchoring matter more.

- Anchor the base well — out here no neighbor will spot a slow theft.
- The PIN and install lock still make a taken mower worthless.
- A tracker matters most where help is far and sightlines are poor.
- Keep the serial and registration handy for a rural sheriff's report.

★ Not sure which risks apply to you?

Tell me where your mower runs and who can see it, and I'll help you turn on the features that matter for your yard without the ones you don't need. Call (330) 200-8042.

Switching on the protections, in order

Most of this lives in your mower's phone app, under a heading like 'Security,' 'Anti-theft,' or 'Settings.' Here's the sensible order.

- **Set the PIN first.** It's the backbone — do this before anything else and write the code down at home.
- **Turn on the lift alarm** and test it once so you know how loud it is and how to hush it.
- **Enable GPS tracking and draw the geofence** around your property line, then turn on phone alerts.
- **Set the installation lock** so the mower is tied to your base.
- **Confirm app notifications are on** — a warning you never see does no good.

★ A one-time setup I'm glad to do

The app is usually the only fiddly part, and it's a one-time job. On a visit or even a quick screen-share, I'll walk through each of these with you and make sure they're actually on. Call (330) 200-8042.

What these steps can and can't do

I'd rather you have realistic expectations than a false sense of security. Here's the straight talk.

A determined thief with a plan and a vehicle can still pick up your mower and drive off. No PIN, alarm, or stake stops that in the moment. What these steps do is make the stolen mower nearly worthless to use or sell, noisy and risky to grab, and easier for the police to trace — which is exactly why most thieves skip a protected mower for an unprotected one.

Think of it the way you think of locking your car. The lock doesn't make theft impossible; it makes your car a worse choice than the unlocked one next to it. That's a real, worthwhile kind of safety.

! Never chase a thief

If you ever get an alert that your mower is moving, do not go after it yourself. Note the location the app shows you, and call the police. A machine is replaceable; you are not.

Let the rest of your home help

Your mower doesn't have to defend itself alone. A few things you may already own make the whole yard less inviting.

A doorbell or yard camera pointed toward where the mower works gives you a recording and a face if anything happens — and a visible camera is a deterrent all by itself. A motion light on the side of the house does the same after dark, when a quiet grab is easiest.

If you run the mower on a schedule, timing it for daylight or for when you're usually home means someone is more likely to be around if the alarm goes off. Our mower setup and scheduling guides walk through setting those times.

✓ A sign can be a deterrent too

A small 'this property is monitored' note, or a visible camera, tells a passerby this isn't the easy yard — often enough to send them elsewhere before they ever touch your mower.

Your print-and-keep checklist

Work down this list once and your mower goes from easy target to not-worth-it. Check each box.

- ☐ PIN lock set, and the code written down somewhere safe at home.
- ☐ Lift alarm turned on and tested once.
- ☐ GPS tracking on, geofence drawn around the property, alerts enabled.
- ☐ Installation lock set so the mower only works at my base.
- ☐ Base moved out of street view.
- ☐ Base staked or anchored down.
- ☐ Serial number and model recorded with my home papers.
- ☐ Mower registered with the maker under my name.
- ☐ A discreet tracker tucked inside.
- ☐ A camera or motion light covers the area where it mows.

✓ Do the free ones first

The app settings — PIN, alarm, tracking, install lock — cost nothing and take ten minutes. If you do only those today, you've already handled most of your risk.

Theft sense in the off-season and beyond

A couple of situations trip people up: winter storage and the day you eventually sell or hand the mower on.

When the mowing season ends, the smartest anti-theft move is simply to bring the mower indoors — a locked garage or basement beats any yard feature. Our winter-storage guide covers doing that right, including the battery and blades, so it's ready and safe come spring.

If you ever sell or give the mower away, remember to remove your PIN, clear the install lock, and un-register it from your account — otherwise the new owner inherits a locked machine, and you stay tied to a mower you no longer own. Do the reverse of this guide on the way out.

★ I can help with the hand-off too

Clearing an account, resetting a PIN, or wiping a map before you sell can be fiddly. If you're passing a mower on, I'm glad to help you do it cleanly so you're fully out of it. Call (330) 200-8042.

Common myths and mistakes

A few wrong ideas leave good people more exposed than they realize. Here are the ones I hear most.

- **'It's too heavy to steal.'** Most robot mowers are a one-person lift. Don't count on weight.
- **'No one around here would take it.'** Maybe — but features that cost nothing to turn on are cheap peace of mind either way.
- **'The app tracking is enough.'** Tracking helps recover, not prevent, and it can be defeated by pulling the battery. Pair it with a PIN and a hidden tracker.
- **'I'll remember the serial.'** You won't when you're flustered. Write it down today.
- **'I set it up years ago.'** Features get added in app updates. It's worth checking what your mower can do now.

! The most common slip

The biggest mistake isn't choosing the wrong feature — it's never turning the features on at all. A surprising number of mowers run for years with every protection switched off.

If you're still shopping, ask these

Theft protection is worth weighing before you buy, not after. A few plain questions at the store or in the listing tell you a lot.

Q: Does it have a PIN lock and a lift alarm?

These are the basics. Almost all do now — but confirm, especially on a bargain or unknown brand.

Q: Does it offer GPS tracking and a geofence?

More common on wire-free satellite models. Handy for recovery and for an early warning if it leaves the yard.

Q: Is there an installation lock tying it to my base?

A nice extra layer that makes a stolen mower useless on another lawn.

Q: How easy is it to get support and parts a few years out?

An established maker is more likely to still honor a PIN reset, a registration, or a warranty down the road.

✓ Theft features are not the whole choice

Pick the mower that fits your yard first — our 'good fit' and guidance-method guides cover that. Then let theft protection be a tie-breaker between two you'd otherwise be happy with.

Don't let worry spoil a good thing

It's easy to read a page like this and feel uneasy. Let me put it back in proportion for you.

Robot mowers are stolen far less often than the worry suggests, and the handful of free settings in this guide handle most of the real risk. Once you've turned them on, you can largely stop thinking about it and just enjoy a lawn that mows itself while you do something you'd rather do.

The point of all this isn't to live in fear — it's to spend one afternoon making your mower a bad target, then relax. A locked, alarmed, trackable mower in a sensible spot is about as safe as a yard machine gets.

★ Peace of mind in one visit

If the worry is nagging at you, let me come turn everything on and show you it's handled. Most folks feel a lot lighter once they've seen the alarm work and know the PIN is set. Call (330) 200-8042.

A quiet word with the neighbors

Here in our corner of Ohio, a watchful neighbor is still one of the best security systems going — and it costs nothing.

Let the folks next door know your mower runs on its own at certain times, so a small machine crossing the yard doesn't alarm them — and so a stranger carrying it off does. Neighbors who know what normal looks like are the ones who notice when something's off.

If your road has a neighborhood group or a community page, a friendly heads-up that robot mowers are around now helps everyone keep an eye out for each other's machines. Looking out for one another is good Portage County sense.

✓ Trade favors, not just warnings

Offer to keep an eye on their yard too. A couple of neighbors watching each other's homes beats any gadget — and it's the kind of thing that makes a street feel like a neighborhood.

Protections only help if they still work

A theft feature you set once and never check can quietly stop doing its job. A quick seasonal look keeps everything honest.

Each spring, when you bring the mower back out, take five minutes to confirm the PIN still works, the alarm still sounds, tracking still reports a location, and the app is updated. Updates sometimes add new protections worth turning on, and a dead tracker battery is easy to miss.

This fits naturally into the spring startup in our winter-storage guide — recharge, update the app, reset the schedule, and while you're in there, re-check the security settings. One routine, both jobs done.

★ Make it part of the spring tune-up

When I help folks wake a mower up for the season, checking the theft settings is part of the same visit. Call me in April and we'll do it all at once. (330) 200-8042.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from folks worried about mower theft, answered plainly.

Q: Can someone really just pick up my mower and walk off?

Physically, yes — most are a one-person lift. That's why the goal is to make the mower useless and trackable once it's gone, so it isn't worth taking in the first place.

Q: What's the single most important thing to turn on?

The PIN lock. A stolen mower without the code is a brick — it won't run, won't set up, and can't easily be resold. Do that one first.

Q: Will the GPS tracking find my mower if it's taken?

It can show roughly where it is — useful for the police — but only while it has power and signal. A thief can pull the battery, which is why a separate hidden tracker is worth adding.

Q: Should I just bring it inside when I'm worried?

Yes. For the off-season, or any long stretch away, a locked garage beats any yard feature. Our winter-storage guide covers doing that right for the battery and blades.

★ Still uneasy about it?

Keeping a mower safe is exactly the kind of thing I love to take off your plate. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll get every protection switched on together.

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 keeping your robot mower safe from theft 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. I'll help you choose the right machine, get it set up and mapped, connect it to your Wi-Fi and your phone, and show you how to run it. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site — app settings, schedules, a quick question — I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. For anything that calls for a ladder, wiring, or digging, I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro rather than risk it.

★ 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 Layers That Protect a Mower

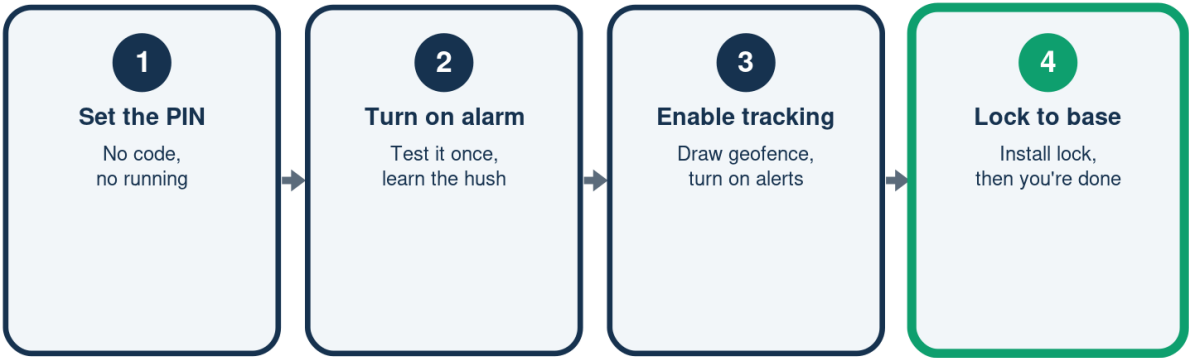
Each one closes a different door on a thief

	Protection	What it does
PIN lock	Won't run without	your code
Lift alarm	Shrieks when	picked up
GPS geofence	Alerts if it	leaves the yard
Install lock	Useless on	another lawn
Hidden tracker	Traces it even	if powered off

A thief has to beat all of them -- most won't bother.

Switching On Protection

The sensible order, mostly in the app



The app settings are free and take about ten minutes.

If the Worst Happens

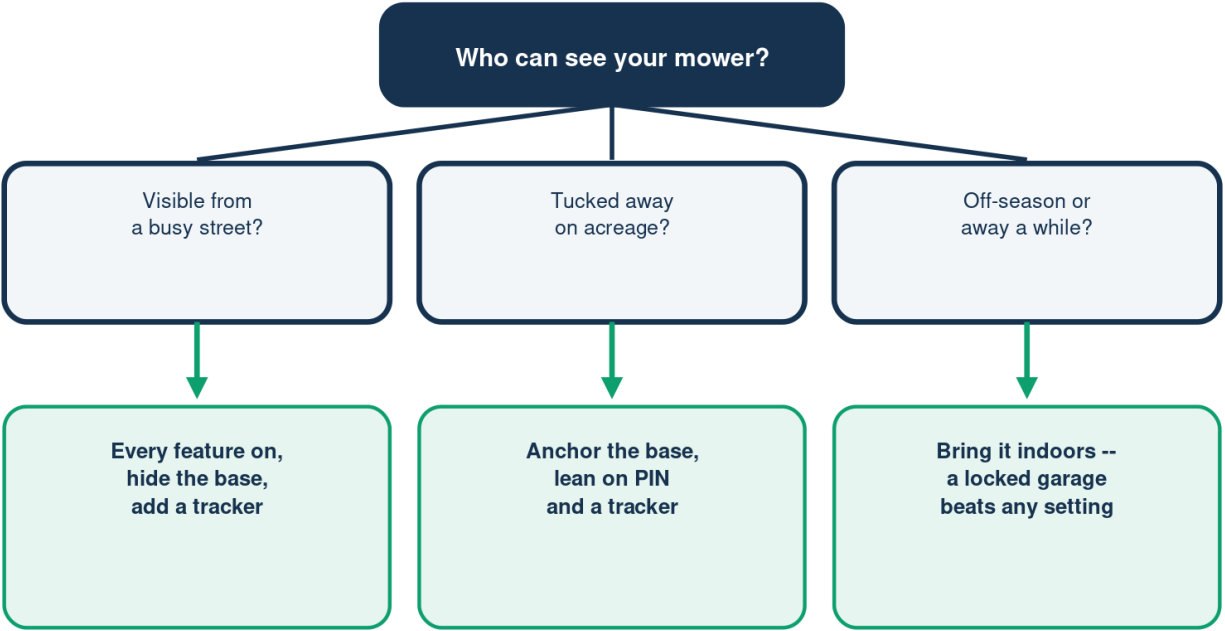
Three cheap habits that get a mower back

	Habit	Why it matters
Record serial	Police and	insurers ask
Register maker	Ties mower	to your name
Hidden tracker	Independent of	mower's battery

Do these before anything goes wrong, not after.

How Much Should You Fuss?

Let your yard answer the question



If you ever see it moving, call the police -- never chase a thief yourself.

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



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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*



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