



An Extended Guide · No. 1726

Keeping Your Phone and Medical-Alert Charged

The lifeline that calls
for help in an outage

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

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! Read this first — this is not medical advice

This guide is about keeping the power on — it is not medical advice, and it is not a substitute for a plan made with the people who know your health. Make your backup-power plan together with your doctor and your equipment supplier, and follow their guidance on your specific device, its settings, and how much backup you need. Register ahead of time on your electric utility's medical or priority-restoration list. And please never rely on a backup battery alone for life-sustaining equipment: a battery buys you time, it does not replace care. If the power is out and anyone's health is at risk — trouble breathing, chest pain, confusion, or bluish lips — call 911, or get to a hospital or shelter that has power. A charged phone is how you reach 911, your doctor, and your equipment supplier — so keeping it powered is part of your safety plan, not a luxury.

Your phone is your lifeline — let's keep it alive

When the power goes out, the little device in your pocket becomes the most important tool in the house. It calls for help, checks on family, and looks up what to do. This guide keeps it — and your medical-alert button — working.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. Folks sometimes plan carefully for the big medical machines and forget the simplest, most vital thing of all: a way to call for help. A dead phone in an emergency is a frightening thing, and it's completely avoidable.

The good news is that keeping a phone and an alert device powered is one of the easiest parts of your whole plan. A little battery pack, a habit of charging, and knowing how your alert system behaves in an outage will carry you a long way.

★ This is the easy, comforting part

Of all the pieces of an outage plan, this one takes the least money and the least fuss. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you set it up in an afternoon.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you'll stay reachable when it matters most.

- ❑ Keep a charged power bank (a pocket-sized battery) for your phone, topped up and ready.
- ❑ Know how your medical-alert device behaves when the power is out — ask the company directly.
- ❑ A battery power station can recharge phones and alert bases for days, safely indoors.
- ❑ Your car can charge a phone too — but never run the engine in a closed garage.
- ❑ Keep a written list of important numbers, in case a dead phone takes your contacts with it.
- ❑ Turn on your phone's battery-saver and dim the screen to stretch the charge.
- ❑ Test your medical-alert button now and then, exactly as the company tells you to.
- ❑ If anyone's health is at risk, call 911 — the phone's whole job is to make that call possible.

✓ One idea to hold onto

A charged phone and a way to charge it again are worth more in an outage than almost any other gadget. Start here, and the rest gets easier.

Why the phone comes first

Everything else in your plan depends on being able to reach a person.

Think about what the phone does in an outage. It calls 911 if someone's struggling. It reaches your equipment supplier for a tank exchange or a battery swap. It lets family check on you, and lets you tell them you're all right. It reports the outage to the power company and hears when power's coming back. None of that works if the battery is flat.

That's why I treat the phone as the first layer of a medical-power plan, not an afterthought. A big battery station is wonderful, but if the phone died three hours in, you've lost your connection to every kind of help there is.

! The phone's most important job is one call

Whatever else it does, the phone exists so you can dial 911 and reach your doctor or supplier. Keep it charged with that single purpose in mind, and you won't go wrong.

The power bank: your simplest phone backup

A power bank is a small rechargeable battery that lives in a drawer and tops up your phone when the wall won't.

For most folks, a good power bank is the single best thing you can buy for outage peace of mind. It's about the size of a deck of cards or a TV remote, you charge it from the wall ahead of time, and when the power goes out you plug your phone into it. No fuel, no fumes, nothing to start up — just a quiet top-up when you need one.

- Charge it fully now, and top it up every month or two so it's always ready.
- Keep the right cord attached to it, so you're never hunting for one in the dark.
- A larger power bank can recharge a phone several times over — ask the seller how many, don't guess.
- Keep it somewhere you'll remember: a nightstand, a kitchen drawer, or your go-bag.

✓ Bigger isn't always better

A power bank so heavy you dread carrying it may sit unused. For many seniors, a light one they actually keep charged beats a big one that stays in the closet.

Keeping your medical-alert device working

That button around your neck or wrist is only as good as the power behind it — so let's understand how it behaves in an outage.

Many medical-alert systems have two parts: a base station that plugs into the wall, and a wearable button. Most base stations include a built-in backup battery so they keep working for a while when the power goes out — but only for a while, and only if that battery is healthy. The wearable button has its own small battery too. The one thing you should never do is guess how long either lasts; ask the company.

- Call your alert company and ask exactly how long the base runs on its backup battery in an outage.
- Ask how you'll know if the base battery is getting weak, and how it gets replaced.
- Ask how the wearable button is charged or when its battery is changed.
- Plug the base into your battery power station in a long outage, so it never runs down.

★ I'll help you make that call

If you're not sure what to ask your alert company, I can sit with you and help you ask it. The answers are theirs to give — I just help you get them clearly.

Does your alert use the phone line or a cell signal?

How your alert device 'phones home' changes what an outage means for it.

Some alert systems call for help over your home phone line; others use a built-in cellular signal, like a mobile phone. This matters in an outage. An old-fashioned copper phone line often keeps working when the power's out, but many modern home-phone services run through your internet box — and that box goes dark the moment the power does. A cellular alert doesn't need your home phone at all, but it does need a cell signal and a charged battery.

- Ask your alert company which kind you have, and what it needs to keep working.
- If it uses your internet-based phone, remember that dies with the power unless the box is on backup.
- If it's cellular, the base still needs power — put it on your battery station in a long outage.
- Either way, keep your cell phone charged as a second way to call for help.

✓ Two ways to call beats one

Whatever your alert system uses, a charged cell phone is a fine backup for it — and the alert button is a fine backup for the phone. Keep both, and you're covered coming and going.

Recharging from an indoor-safe battery station

For a long outage, a battery power station keeps every phone, power bank, and alert base topped up — right there in the living room.

A battery power station is a larger rechargeable battery in a box, with normal wall outlets and USB ports on the front. Because it burns no fuel, it makes no fumes and is perfectly safe to use indoors. For keeping small things charged — phones, power banks, an alert base, a tablet — a power station can go a long, long time, because these devices sip very little. Our guide on why a battery power station suits medical needs goes deeper.

✓ Why a battery is the indoor-safe choice

A battery power station makes no fumes and no carbon monoxide, so unlike a fuel generator it is safe to run indoors — right on the nightstand next to a CPAP, or beside a chair next to a concentrator. It is also quiet enough to sleep next to and gives clean, steady power that sensitive equipment is happy with. For phones and alert devices especially, a single charged power station can keep you connected far longer than you might expect, since they draw so little.

Your car is a charger too

In a pinch, the vehicle in your driveway can keep a phone alive — with one firm safety rule.

Every car has a 12-volt outlet (the old cigarette-lighter socket), and a cheap adapter turns it into a phone charger. Many newer cars have USB ports built in. It's a handy backup, especially if you're heading out anyway. Our guide on car and DC power covers this in more detail, including how to do it safely.

! A generator's exhaust is deadly — a battery is not

If your backup plan includes a gas- or propane-powered generator, remember that its exhaust contains carbon monoxide — an invisible, odorless gas that can kill in minutes. Never run any fuel-burning generator indoors, in a garage, in a shed, in a basement, or on a porch, not even with a door open and a fan going. Run it outside only, well away from the house — the safety agencies say at least 20 feet — with the exhaust pointed away from every window, door, and vent. This is one big reason a battery power station suits medical equipment so well: it makes no exhaust at all, so it is safe to use right beside the bed, indoors. Put battery-backup carbon-monoxide alarms on every floor and outside the bedrooms, and if an alarm sounds or anyone feels dizzy, sick, or sleepy, get everyone into fresh air first and ask questions later. Never run the car's engine to charge a phone while the car is parked in a closed or attached garage — the exhaust is the same deadly carbon monoxide a generator makes. Pull the car outside first, well away from open windows and doors.

Keep your important numbers on paper too

If the phone that holds all your contacts goes dark, a paper list keeps you connected.

We all trust our phones to remember every number for us — until the phone dies, or a helper has to use a different one. A simple written card of the numbers that matter, kept where anyone can find it, is a small thing that saves real panic. Put a copy on the fridge and another in your wallet or go-bag.

- ❑ 911 (the one number to know by heart).
- ❑ Your doctor's office and, if you have one, the after-hours line.
- ❑ Your equipment supplier, including their emergency or after-hours number.
- ❑ Your electric utility's outage line.
- ❑ Two family members or neighbors who could come help.
- ❑ Your alert company's customer-service number.

✓ Write it big and clear

Print or write the list in large, dark letters. In a stressful moment, with the lights out, easy-to-read numbers are a real kindness to yourself.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Where you live changes how reliable your cell signal is and how long you'll need to keep everything charged on your own.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or a close-in suburb, cell towers are near and outages usually run shorter, so staying reachable is often straightforward.

- A single power bank plus your phone may carry you through a typical shorter outage.
- Cell coverage is usually strong, so your phone and any cellular alert should hold a good signal.
- Help and a place to charge — a relative, a library, a pharmacy — are usually a short drive away.
- Your alert company and supplier can often reach you quickly if something's wrong.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, outages run longer and cell signal can be weaker or spottier, so plan for more days on your own power and check your coverage in advance.

- Keep more charging capacity on hand — a battery power station, not just one small power bank.
- Test where in and around the house you get the best cell signal, before you need it.
- If signal is poor, ask your carrier about a signal booster, and keep the alert base on backup power.
- A longer drive to help means your charged phone matters even more — it's how you summon it.

★ Let's check your signal and your setup

On a visit I can check where your home gets the best cell signal, set up your power banks and station, and make sure your alert device is ready for a long outage. Call (330) 200-8042.

Turn charging into a habit you never think about

The trick isn't remembering in a storm — it's a small routine that keeps everything ready all the time.

Batteries drift down over weeks whether you use them or not. The answer is a gentle habit rather than a scramble when the sky turns dark. Tie your charge-check to something you already do every so often, and it stops being one more thing to remember.

- Keep the phone on its charger overnight, every night, so it starts each day full.
- Top up the power bank on the first of the month — pick a date you won't forget.
- Keep cords with their devices, not wandering around the house.
- When a storm is in the forecast, do a quick round and top everything up.

✓ Little and often wins

A minute a month keeps your whole charging kit ready. That beats an anxious hunt for a working cord when the power's already gone.

Making a charge last longer in an outage

A few simple settings can stretch a phone's battery from hours into much longer, when every bit counts.

When the power's out and you're not sure when it'll be back, treat your phone's battery like a canteen of water on a hot day — use it for what matters and don't waste it. A handful of easy changes make a real difference, and I'm glad to set them up with you so they're ready.

- Turn on Low Power Mode or Battery Saver — one tap that quietly does the rest.
- Dim the screen and let it turn off quickly when you set the phone down.
- Close apps you don't need, and skip videos and games to save the big drains.
- Keep calls short and lean on texts, which use far less power.

✓ Save it for the call that counts

The goal isn't to stare at a black screen — it's to be sure there's power left for the call to 911, your doctor, or your family when you need it.

The phone's whole purpose: reaching help

Never hesitate to use the charge you've saved for the reason you saved it.

If equipment fails and your backups are running low, or if someone is having trouble breathing, has chest pain, seems confused, or has bluish lips or skin — call 911. Don't wait to see if it passes, and don't worry about the battery. Keeping the phone charged was always for exactly this moment.

! A charged phone buys time — it does not replace care

Staying reachable is meant to bring help to you, or you to help. It is never a reason to wait out something serious at home. When in doubt, call 911 or head for a hospital or shelter with power.

Test the whole thing on a calm day

A backup you've tried once is one you can trust in the dark.

Pick an easy afternoon and run through it. Unplug the phone and charge it from the power bank to be sure the cord and the bank both work. Test your medical-alert button exactly the way the company tells you to. If you have a battery power station, plug a phone into it and watch it charge. Little problems — a frayed cord, a dead power bank — show up in a calm test, not in a crisis. Our testing guide walks through the whole plan.

★ Let's test it together

I'm happy to come out and run through it with you: the power banks, the station, and a proper test of your alert button. Call or text (330) 200-8042 to set up a visit.

What I help with — and what I don't

Being clear about this line is part of doing right by you.

Bill helps with	Always someone else's call
Choosing and setting up power banks	Your medical-alert coverage plan
Setting up battery-saver on your phone	Your prescribed device settings
Testing charging and your alert button	When to seek emergency care
Making a big-print numbers card	Your health and medications

★ **A boundary I keep**

I handle the power and the gadgets. Your alert company handles your monitoring, and your doctor handles your care. I'll always point you to the right person.

A few gentle reminders

Not judgments — just the slip-ups I see most, so you can step around them.

- Owning a power bank but never charging it, so it's flat when you reach for it.
- Assuming the home phone will work in an outage when it actually runs through the internet box.
- Not knowing how long the alert base lasts on its backup battery.
- Keeping every important number only in a phone that could die.
- Running the car engine in the garage to charge a phone — a deadly carbon-monoxide risk.

! If one of these sounds familiar, that's all right

Spotting a gap is the whole point of this page. Fix one this week — charge the power bank, or make the numbers card — and you're already safer.

A caring checklist

Work through it at your own pace — the only deadline is the one you set.

- ☐ I have a power bank for my phone, and it's charged.
- ☐ I know how long my medical-alert base lasts when the power is out.
- ☐ I know whether my alert uses the phone line or a cell signal.
- ☐ I can recharge phones and the alert base from a battery power station in a long outage.
- ☐ I have a big-print card of important numbers, on the fridge and in my wallet.
- ☐ I know how to turn on my phone's battery-saver.
- ☐ I've tested my alert button the way the company recommends.
- ☐ I know the signs that mean call 911.

★ Even a few boxes checked is real progress

You don't have to finish this today. Every box you check is one more way you can reach help when you need it.

Questions worth asking the pros in your life

Some questions belong with your alert company or carrier, not with me — here's how to ask them well.

Q: What should I ask my medical-alert company?

How long the base runs on its backup battery, whether it uses your phone line or cellular, how the wearable button is powered, and how to test the system properly.

Q: What should I ask my phone carrier?

Whether your area has strong coverage, whether a signal booster would help at your home, and whether they offer any emergency backup options.

Q: What should I ask my equipment supplier?

Their after-hours emergency number, and how quickly they can reach you if you lose power for a long stretch.

Q: What can Bill help me set up?

Power banks, a battery power station for charging, your phone's battery-saver settings, a big-print numbers card, and a full test of the whole kit.

✓ I'll help you prepare the questions

Not sure how to ask? Call me first and we'll write down exactly what to ask your alert company and carrier, so the call is quick and clear.

Common Questions

The questions families ask me most about staying reachable, answered plainly.

Q: How many times will a power bank recharge my phone?

It depends on the size of the bank and the phone — anywhere from part of a charge to several full ones. Ask the seller for that device; I won't guess a number for you.

Q: Will my home phone work when the power's out?

An old copper landline often does; a modern phone that runs through your internet box usually doesn't, because the box loses power. Ask your provider which you have.

Q: Is it safe to charge my phone from a battery power station indoors?

Yes — it burns no fuel, makes no fumes, and is fine indoors. Phones and alert bases draw so little that a station keeps them going a very long time.

Q: Can I charge my phone from my car?

Yes, with a cheap 12-volt adapter — but never run the engine in a closed or attached garage. Pull the car outside first, away from windows and doors.

★ However far along you are, I'm glad to help

Whether you're starting from scratch or fine-tuning, call or text me at (330) 200-8042. We'll make sure you can always reach help, one calm step at a time.

Bringing it all together

Staying reachable comes down to a charged phone, a way to charge it again, and an alert device you understand.

A power bank covers a short outage. A battery power station keeps phones and your alert base topped up for days, safely indoors. The car is a backup charger if you're careful about the garage. A paper list of numbers means a dead phone can't cut you off, and battery-saver stretches every charge. Test it once, and it all just works when you need it.

This ties in with the rest of the batch — the battery-station guide, the car and DC guide, and the go-bag guide all touch on keeping you connected. Take them one at a time.

★ Let's set up your lifeline together

There's no need to figure this out alone. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, and we'll make sure help is always one call away.

Your next small step

Small, doable steps in a gentle order — no need to do them all at once.

- Today: charge your phone and, if you have one, your power bank.
- This week: call your alert company and ask how it behaves in an outage.
- This week: make a big-print card of your important numbers.
- This month: get a power bank if you don't have one, and learn your phone's battery-saver.
- Before storm season: test the whole kit on a calm day.

✓ One step at a time is plenty

Even charging one power bank today moves you from worried to ready. The rest can follow whenever you like.

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 phone and medical-alert device charged feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other important home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

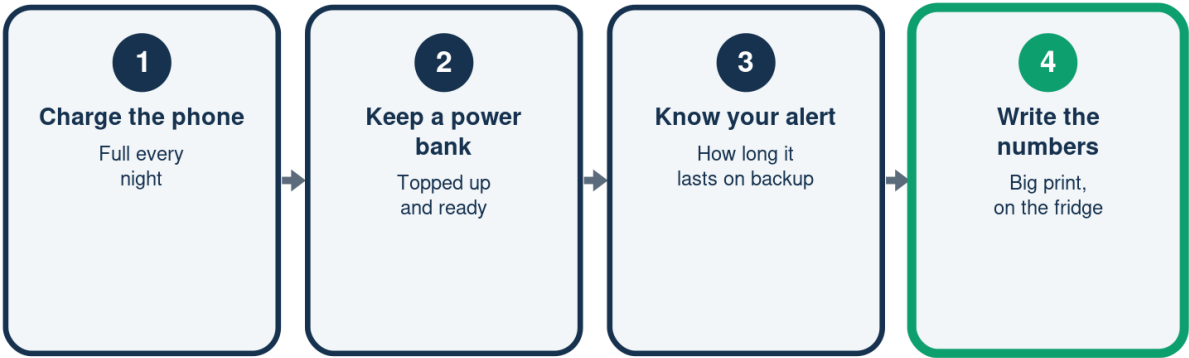
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. I'll help you choose and set up a battery power station, get the equipment your family depends on connected safely, and test the whole plan before you ever need it. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I help with the power side only — your settings, your prescription, and when to seek care always stay with your doctor and your equipment supplier — and for any licensed electrical work, I'll line you up with a trustworthy local pro.

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

Staying Reachable in Four Steps

Simple layers that keep help one call away



Each layer backs up the one before it.

Your Charging Layers

No single battery has to do the whole job

	What it charges	How long
Power bank	Phone	A short outage
Battery station	Phones, alert base	Days, indoors
Car (12-volt)	Phone	While outside
Wall (normal days)	Everything	Keep it topped

Layers cover for each other -- that's the whole idea.

How Your Alert Device Phones Home

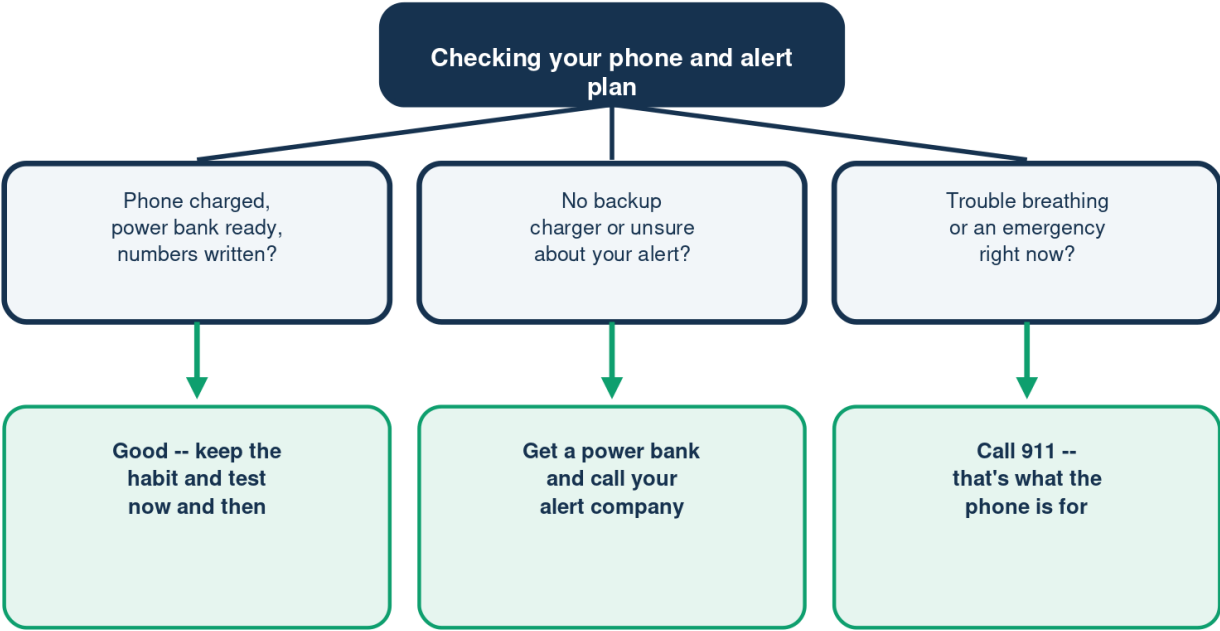
Ask your company which kind you have

	Landline type	Cellular type
Needs home phone?	Yes	No
Works if power out?	Copper: often	If base powered
Needs cell signal?	No	Yes
Put base on backup	Yes	Yes

Keep a charged cell phone as a second way to call for help.

What Should You Do Right Now?

A calm gut-check on staying reachable



This guide isn't medical advice -- always follow your doctor and your equipment supplier.

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



Need a Real Person?

You do not have to remember all of it.
You just have to remember you can call.
Friendly, in-home tech help -- I come to you.

BILL'S PROMISE

If you are not 100% happy with a visit, I will
make it right -- or refund it. No awkwardness,
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— Bill

Prefer help without a visit?

Bill can screen-share and fix many things remotely — a flat \$49, free for Support Plan members.



A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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