



An Extended Guide · No. 1740

Recharging Your Power Station in a Long Outage

Generator, car, and
solar — done safely

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. Recharging keeps your equipment going through a long outage — but even the best recharging plan never replaces your doctor's and supplier's guidance, or calling 911 if health is at risk.

Keeping the battery coming back to life

A battery power station is wonderful, but even a big one empties eventually. For a long outage, the real question is how you refill it — so it keeps carrying your equipment day after day.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. For a short outage, a well-sized battery is the whole answer. For a long one, the battery is only half the story; the other half is recharging. This guide covers the three practical ways to put power back in — a generator, the car, and solar — and how to use them calmly and safely.

None of it is complicated once you know the moves. With a way to recharge, a single battery station can carry you through outages that last for days.

★ Let's set up your recharging plan

A battery you can refill is a battery you can count on. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll set up the right recharging for your home.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, your battery keeps coming back through a long outage.

- ❑ A generator (outdoors only) is the sturdiest way to recharge in a long outage.
- ❑ The car, with the right charging cable, can top up the station too.
- ❑ Solar panels can recharge it when the sun's out — quiet and fuel-free.
- ❑ Start recharging while you still have a cushion, not at empty.
- ❑ Recharge in daylight when you can, so you can see and work safely.
- ❑ Charge the station first, then run your devices from it — don't do both against the clock.
- ❑ Never run a generator or the car engine indoors — outdoors only, always.
- ❑ If you can't recharge and health is at risk, relocate early or call 911.

✓ One idea to hold onto

A battery you can refill changes everything: it turns a battery that lasts hours into one that can carry you for days.

Why recharging is the other half of the plan

Even a large battery is a tank, not a well — eventually it needs refilling.

It's easy to focus on how big a battery to buy and forget the equally important question: how you'll fill it back up. In a short outage, you may never need to. But in a multi-day outage — the kind that worries medical households most — recharging is what keeps your equipment running long after a single charge would have run out. A well-sized battery plus a way to recharge is a far stronger plan than a huge battery with no way to refill it.

Our sizing guide covers choosing the battery; this guide covers keeping it full. Together they're what carry you through a long outage.

★ Battery plus recharging beats battery alone

The best plans pair a sensible battery with a reliable way to refill it. That combination, not sheer battery size, is what handles a long outage.

Method one: a generator, outdoors

For a long outage, a generator is the sturdiest way to keep the battery full.

A fuel-powered generator is the workhorse of long-outage recharging. Run outdoors, it can top your battery station back up once or twice a day, so the quiet, fume-free battery does the indoor work and the generator keeps refilling it. This pairing gives you the best of both: indoor-safe power for your equipment, plus the endurance a generator adds. You don't need to run the generator constantly — just long enough to recharge, then shut it off.

- Run the generator outdoors to recharge the station, then shut it off.
- You needn't run it around the clock — recharge, then rest it.
- Keep safely stored fuel on hand for a multi-day outage.
- Turn it off and let it cool before refueling, outdoors, away from the house.

★ I set up the safe use, not the gas work

I help you place the generator safely and set up recharging your station from it. Any hookup to your home's wiring is a licensed electrician's job, and I'll coordinate that.

The one rule for generator recharging

It's worth its own page, because it's the rule that keeps everyone safe.

Recharging with a generator is a great move — with the one condition that never bends, no matter how long the outage or how much you need the power.

! 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.

Method two: the car

The vehicle in your driveway can refill the station too, with the right cable.

With a charging cable made for your battery station, the car can top it up: you run the engine outdoors and let the station charge. It's slower than a wall outlet or a generator, but over a few hours it gives back real capacity — and it's handy because you may be running the car for other reasons anyway. Our car and DC power guide covers this in more detail, including protecting the car's own battery.

- Use a charging cable made for your battery station.
- Run the engine outdoors, in the open, while it charges.
- It's slower than a generator, but real capacity comes back over hours.
- Don't run the car's own battery flat — run the engine for bigger charges.

✓ A handy partner to a generator

The car is a fine backup to a generator, or a standalone option if you don't have one. Either way, the engine runs outdoors only.

Method three: solar panels

When the sun's out, portable solar refills the battery quietly, with no fuel at all.

Many battery power stations can charge from portable solar panels. It's a lovely option: silent, fuel-free, and safe to leave working while you go about your day. The honest catch is that it depends on the weather. On a bright day it can give back real capacity; on a gray, cloudy stretch it gives much less. So solar is best as one layer among several, not your only way to recharge — especially here in Ohio, where storms and clouds often come together.

- Check whether your station can charge from solar, and which panels fit.
- Set panels in direct sun, angled toward it, for the most power.
- Expect strong charging on bright days, much less when it's cloudy.
- Treat solar as a helpful layer, not your only recharging method.

✓ Wonderful in sun, modest in clouds

Solar shines on a clear day and struggles on a gray one. Pair it with a generator or the car so a cloudy stretch never leaves you stuck.

Timing: recharge before empty, in daylight

When you recharge matters almost as much as how.

Two timing habits make recharging calm and safe. First, start topping up while you still have a cushion — recharging takes time, and it's far easier with hours in hand than minutes. Second, recharge in daylight when you can, so you can see to set up a generator or panels safely and handle fuel without fumbling in the dark. Planning your recharges around the daytime turns them into a simple part of the day.

- Begin recharging while you still have a comfortable cushion.
- Recharge during daylight when you can, for safety and ease.
- Plan a rhythm — say, a midday top-up — rather than waiting for warnings.
- In cold weather, remember batteries can charge and give a little less.

✓ Daylight and a cushion make it easy

A recharge you start at midday with power to spare is a calm chore. One you start at midnight near empty is a stressful scramble — so plan ahead.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Where you live decides how much your whole plan leans on recharging.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or a close-in suburb, outages are usually shorter, so you may rarely need to recharge at all — but it's still wise to have a way.

- A single battery charge may cover a typical shorter outage.
- If you do recharge, the car is often the simplest option in town.
- Generator placement takes extra care with neighbors close by.
- Power usually returns before recharging becomes a daily routine.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, outages run for days, so recharging isn't optional — it's what keeps your equipment going, and a generator usually earns its keep.

- Plan to recharge daily — a generator (outdoors) is often the mainstay.
- Keep safely stored fuel for a multi-day outage.
- Solar and the car make good extra layers when the weather cooperates.
- Remember the well pump is off too, so fuel and water both matter.

★ Let's build your recharging plan

Tell me your battery station and how long outages last where you are, and I'll help you set up the right mix of recharging. Call (330) 200-8042.

Sequencing: charge, then run

A little order makes your recharging go much further.

You'll get the most from a recharge with a bit of sequencing. Where it's safe for your equipment, it's often easiest to give the station a good top-up and then run your devices from it, rather than trying to charge and run everything at full tilt at the same time. Charging while also powering a heavy load can be slow going. Your supplier can advise whether any device must run continuously; for those, we plan around it.

- Where safe, top up the station well, then run devices from it.
- Avoid charging and running a heavy load against the clock together.
- For any device that must run continuously, plan recharging around it.
- Ask your supplier which devices can pause and which can't.

★ We'll plan the rhythm together

Every household's mix of devices is different. I'll help you work out a recharging rhythm that keeps the essentials running and the battery topped up.

How long recharging takes

It varies — so we plan on your real numbers, not a guess.

How long a recharge takes depends on your battery station, the method, and even the weather, so I won't hand you a figure that might not fit your gear. A wall-style charge from a generator is usually the fastest; the car is slower; solar depends on the sun. The right way to know is to test it once on a calm day and time it, so you can plan your outage recharges around a real number. Our testing guide covers timing a recharge safely.

✓ Test it once, then you know

Rather than guessing, time a recharge on a calm day. Then you know exactly how long to allow, and recharging in an outage becomes predictable.

When recharging isn't enough

Recharging buys days — but health always comes first.

Recharging can carry you a remarkably long way, but it has limits: fuel runs out, clouds linger, equipment can fail. If you reach a point where you can't keep the battery going and power isn't coming back, relocate early to somewhere with electricity. And if someone is having trouble breathing, has chest pain, seems confused, or has bluish lips or skin — call 911 right away, whatever the battery is doing. Recharging buys time; it never replaces care.

! Recharging buys time — it does not replace care

All the recharging in the world is meant to keep an outage manageable. If health is ever slipping, use that time to get help — call 911 or get to a hospital or shelter with power.

Test your recharging on a calm day

A recharging plan you've tried is one you can rely on.

Before you count on it, give your recharging a dry run. Charge the station from your generator, car, or solar in the daylight, time how long it takes, and see how much capacity comes back. You'll learn the practical details — which cable, where to set up, how the weather affects solar — while there's no pressure at all. And the safety rule holds even for a test: the engine runs outdoors only. Our testing guide walks through the whole plan.

★ Let's test it together

I'm glad to run through your recharging with you on a calm day — the cables, the setup, the timing — so it just works in a real outage. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

What I help with — and what I don't

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

Bill helps with	Someone else's job
Setting up recharging cables & panels	Any panel wiring (electrician)
Safe generator placement outdoors	Gas work (a gas pro)
A recharging rhythm and timing test	Which devices can pause (supplier)
Planning the whole recharge plan	When to seek care (doctor / 911)

★ **A boundary I keep**

I set up safe, effective recharging and coordinate the licensed pros. Which devices can pause, and anything medical, stays with your supplier and doctor.

A few gentle reminders

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

- Buying a big battery but no way to recharge it in a long outage.
- Waiting until nearly empty to start recharging, when time's tightest.
- Running a generator or the car engine indoors to recharge — deadly.
- Relying on solar alone, then getting caught by a cloudy stretch.
- Never timing a recharge, so you're guessing how long it takes.

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

Spotting a gap is the whole point. Fix one this week — get a charging cable, or time a recharge — and your long-outage plan is stronger.

A recharging checklist

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

- ☐ I have at least one way to recharge my station — generator, car, or solar.
- ☐ I know the safe outdoor spot for a generator, 20-plus feet from the house.
- ☐ I have the right charging cables or solar panels for my station.
- ☐ I keep safely stored fuel if I rely on a generator.
- ☐ I've timed a recharge, so I know how long it takes.
- ☐ I plan to recharge in daylight, before the battery is empty.
- ☐ I know to relocate early if I can't keep the battery going.
- ☐ I know the signs that mean call 911.

★ Even a few boxes checked is real progress

You don't have to do it all today. Every box makes a long outage more manageable when it comes.

Questions worth asking the pros in your life

A few questions make your recharging plan safe and solid.

Q: What should I ask about my battery station?

Which recharging methods it supports — generator, car, solar — and which exact cables or panels fit it.

Q: What should I ask my equipment supplier?

Which of your devices can pause during a recharge and which must run continuously, so we plan the rhythm around them.

Q: What should I ask an electrician?

If any part of a generator setup should be wired in, and that all of it meets local code — I'll coordinate this for you.

Q: What can Bill set up for me?

Safe generator placement, the right recharging cables and panels, a recharging rhythm, and a timing test on a calm day.

✓ I'll help you prepare the questions

Not sure how to ask? Call me first and we'll write down what to ask about your station and devices, so your recharging plan has no gaps.

Common Questions

The questions folks ask me most about recharging, answered plainly.

Q: Do I really need to recharge, or is a big battery enough?

For a short outage, a good battery may be enough. For a multi-day outage, recharging is what keeps you going — a sensible battery plus a way to refill it beats a huge battery alone.

Q: What's the best way to recharge in a long outage?

A generator, run outdoors, is usually the sturdiest. The car is a good partner, and solar helps when the sun's out. Many folks keep more than one method.

Q: Can I recharge indoors?

The battery station is safe indoors, but never the generator or the car engine that charges it — those run outdoors only, at least 20 feet from the house, exhaust pointed away.

Q: How long does a recharge take?

It depends on your station, the method, and the weather. Rather than guess, time one on a calm day — then you'll know exactly how long to allow.

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

Whether you're adding recharging to your plan or refining it, call or text me at (330) 200-8042. We'll keep your battery coming back, one calm step at a time.

Bringing it all together

Recharging turns a battery that lasts hours into one that carries you for days.

A generator, run outdoors, is the sturdiest way to refill your station in a long outage; the car is a fine partner; and solar helps when the sun cooperates. Start recharging with a cushion, in daylight, and sequence charging and running so the battery goes further. Time a recharge once so you know your real numbers, keep the engine outdoors always, and relocate early if you ever can't keep up. That's a battery you can count on for the long haul.

This pairs with the sizing, car-power, generator-safety, and battery-low guides. Take them one at a time.

★ Let's set up your recharging

There's no need to figure this out alone. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, and we'll build a recharging plan that keeps your equipment running for days.

Your next small step

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

- This week: find out which recharging methods your station supports.
- This week: get the right charging cable for at least one method.
- This month: decide the safe outdoor spot for a generator, if you have one.
- This month: time a recharge on a calm day so you know how long it takes.
- Before storm season: store fuel safely if you rely on a generator.

✓ One step at a time is plenty

Even learning which recharging methods your station supports today is a real start.
The rest follows at your pace.

An honest word about solar in Ohio

Solar is a lovely layer here — as long as you know its limits.

I'm often asked whether solar is worth it for backup here in Portage County, and my honest answer is: as one layer, yes; as your only one, be careful. Our storms often come with gray, cloudy days, and that's exactly when solar gives the least. On a bright day, portable panels can put real power back into your station with no fuel and no noise. On a dim, stormy stretch, they may give only a little. So enjoy solar for what it's good at, and keep a generator or the car as your dependable fallback when the clouds roll in.

★ A great layer, paired with a sure one

If you like the idea of quiet, fuel-free solar, I'm glad to help you set it up — alongside a generator or the car, so a cloudy week never leaves you short. Call (330) 200-8042.

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 recharging your power station in a long outage 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.

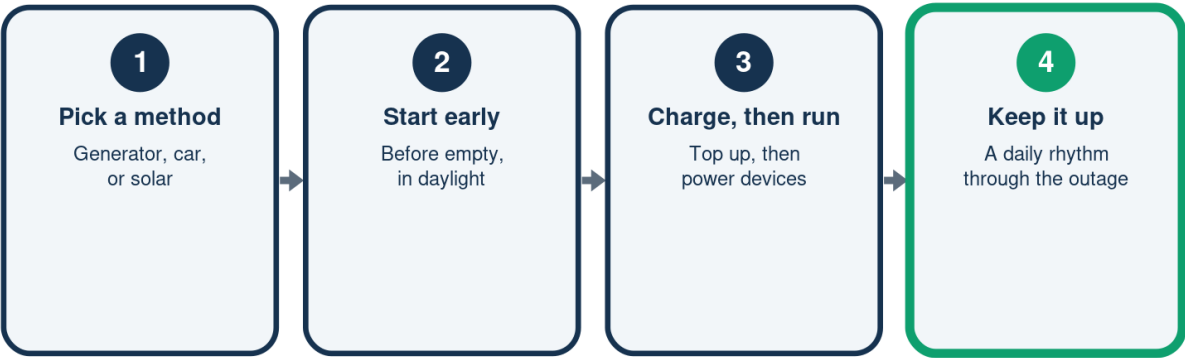
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. I'll help you choose and set up a battery power station, get the equipment your family depends on connected safely, and test the whole plan before you ever 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

Keeping the Battery Full, Step by Step

Turn hours of power into days



The engine -- generator or car -- runs outdoors only.

Three Ways to Recharge

Many folks keep more than one

	Method	Good to know
Generator	Sturdiest, fastest	Outdoors, needs fuel
Car	Handy partner	Slower, engine outside
Solar	Quiet, fuel-free	Needs sun
All of them	Refill the station	Which the battery runs

Pair solar with a generator or car for cloudy stretches.

Recharge Smart

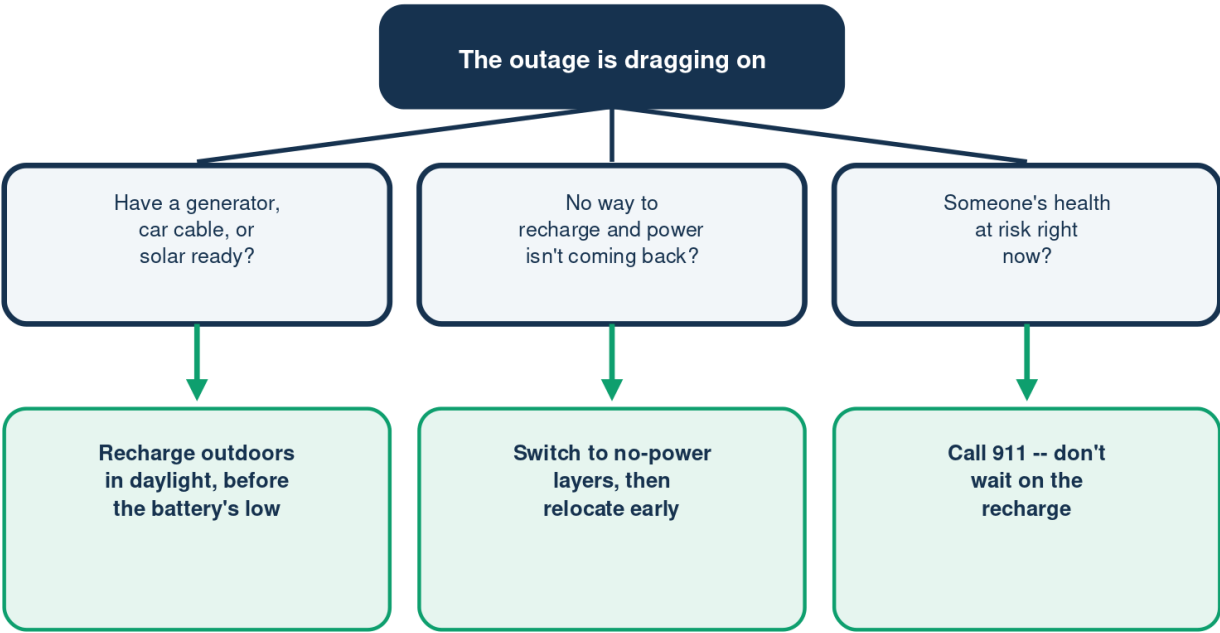
When and how you recharge matters

	Do	Avoid
When to start	With a cushion	Waiting for empty
Time of day	Daylight	Fumbling at night
Sequence	Charge, then run	Both against the clock
The engine	Outdoors only	Never in a garage

Time a recharge once on a calm day, so you know your real numbers.

Long Outage -- How Do I Recharge?

A calm gut-check on keeping the battery full



This guide isn't medical advice -- recharging buys time, never care.

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.
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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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