



An Extended Guide · No. 1339

Questions to Ask Before You Hire an Electrician

Hiring the right
person for the job

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! Read this first — panel work is a licensed electrician's job

A transfer switch connects to your home's electrical panel, and panel work is among the most dangerous jobs in any house. The power inside a panel can injure or kill even with the lights off, and a wiring mistake can start a fire or push deadly voltage back onto the lines outside, where a utility crew may be working. Installing, moving, or changing a transfer switch is a licensed electrician's job — almost always with a permit and an inspection. It is never a do-it-yourself project, and it is never something I do myself. This guide is here to help you understand, choose, and safely use a transfer switch — not to wire one. And please, never try to shortcut all this by backfeeding a generator through a wall or dryer outlet with a double-ended cord; that shortcut kills people, and a transfer switch is the safe, legal way to do the very thing it tempts you to do. Because this is panel work, the person you hire must be a licensed electrician — these questions help you pick a good one.

Hiring the right person for the job

A transfer switch is only as good as the person who installs it. This guide gives you the questions to ask so you hire a licensed, experienced electrician you can trust — and spot the ones you can't.

I'm Bill. Since this is panel work, it has to be a licensed electrician — that part isn't negotiable. But not every electrician is equally experienced with transfer switches or equally honest about permits and pricing. A few good questions, asked plainly, sort the trustworthy pros from the rest.

You don't need to sound like an expert to ask these. I'll give you the questions and tell you what good answers sound like — and I'm glad to help you line up a trustworthy local electrician myself.

★ Want help finding a good electrician?

I keep a short list of licensed electricians I trust in the area. Call or text (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you connect with the right one.

Hiring well, on one page

If you remember only these, you'll hire wisely.

- ❑ Confirm they're a licensed electrician and carry insurance.
- ❑ Ask about their experience with transfer switches specifically.
- ❑ Make sure they'll pull the permit and arrange the inspection.
- ❑ Get a written, itemized quote — and get two or three to compare.
- ❑ Ask them to walk you through operating it before they leave.
- ❑ Trust your gut: never feel rushed, and treat pressure as a red flag.

✓ Good answers are clear and unhurried

A trustworthy electrician welcomes your questions and answers plainly. Evasiveness or pressure is your signal to look elsewhere.

Why the right electrician matters so much

This isn't a job where 'good enough' is good enough.

A transfer switch's safety lives in the details — the isolation, the grounding, the neutral, the correct sizing. Done well, it protects your family for years. Done poorly, it can quietly defeat the very safety it's meant to provide. That's why choosing a licensed, experienced, honest electrician is the most important decision in the whole project — more than the brand of switch or the exact price.

✓ The installer matters more than the hardware

A great electrician with a modest switch beats a careless one with a fancy switch every time. Choose the person carefully.

Confirm the license and insurance

This is the first, non-negotiable checkpoint.

Ask directly: 'Are you a licensed electrician, and are you insured?' A reputable pro will answer without hesitation and can show proof. Panel work legally requires a licensed electrician, and insurance protects you if something goes wrong during the job. Anyone who's cagey about their license, or who isn't licensed for electrical work, is an automatic no — no matter how confident or friendly they seem.

! No license, no job

If someone can't confirm they're a licensed electrician, that's the end of the conversation for panel work. This one isn't negotiable.

Ask about transfer-switch experience

Licensed is the floor; experienced with this specific job is the goal.

Ask how many transfer switches they've installed and whether they do them regularly. An electrician who installs these often will know the local permit process, size things well, and anticipate the little wrinkles. If you're on a well, ask specifically about their experience wiring 240-volt well pumps to transfer switches. Experience with your kind of job is worth seeking out.

✓ Match the experience to your home

If you have a well pump or a whole-panel setup in mind, ask about experience with exactly that. A pro who does it often is a safer bet.

'Will you pull the permit?'

This single question tells you a lot about an electrician's integrity.

Ask plainly whether they'll pull the permit and arrange the inspection. The right answer is a confident yes — a reputable electrician does this as a matter of course. If they suggest skipping the permit to save money or time, treat it as a serious red flag about how they approach safety and rules, and look elsewhere. Our permits-and-inspection guide explains why the permit protects you.

! 'Skip the permit' means walk away

An electrician who offers to dodge the permit is showing you their judgment. That's a warning worth heeding before they touch your panel.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Finding a good electrician differs a little between town and country — mostly in availability and travel.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town, you'll usually have several licensed electricians to choose from, which makes getting multiple quotes easy. Use that choice to compare and pick the best fit.

- More electricians nearby means easier comparison shopping.
- Ask each the same questions so you can compare fairly.
- Local reputation is easy to check with neighbors and reviews.
- Confirm experience with your specific setup, well pump or not.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, there may be fewer electricians nearby, and some may charge for travel — so ask about that up front, and prioritize one with real well-pump and rural experience.

- Fewer local pros may mean planning ahead and asking about travel charges.
- Prioritize experience with 240-volt well pumps and rural setups.
- Ask neighbors on wells who they trust — rural word-of-mouth is gold.
- A pro who knows your township or county's permit office is a plus.

★ Need a trusted local name?

Town or country, I can help you find a licensed electrician I trust for your area and your kind of home. Call (330) 200-8042.

Check references and reputation

Past customers tell you what a quote can't.

Ask for references, and check online reviews and local word-of-mouth. Neighbors, friends, and family who've had similar work done are a wonderful source — especially other folks on wells if that's you. A pattern of satisfied customers, tidy work, and honest dealing is exactly what you want. Don't be shy about asking; a good electrician is glad to point you to happy customers.

✓ Ask your neighbors

Word-of-mouth from people you trust is often the best reference of all. Ask around before you commit.

Insist on a written, itemized quote

A clear quote protects both of you and makes comparison possible.

Ask for the quote in writing, itemized — the switch and approach, the inlet and cord, the permit and inspection, any panel work, and the total. This lets you compare quotes fairly and prevents misunderstandings later. Be wary of anyone who'll only give a vague verbal number or pushes for a big deposit before any work. Our cost-and-quotes guide covers reading and comparing quotes in more detail.

! Verbal-only is a warning sign

A reputable electrician puts it in writing. A vague, verbal-only quote is hard to compare and easy to dispute — ask for it on paper.

Good technical questions to ask

You don't need the answers memorized — just ask, and listen for clear, confident replies.

Q: Do you recommend an essential-circuits or whole-panel switch for my home?

The answer should tie to your generator and needs, not just what's easiest to sell. Our whole-panel guide covers the trade-off.

Q: How will you make sure the switch matches my generator?

A good pro will ask about your generator and size things to it. See our sizing guide.

Q: Where do you recommend the inlet box, and why?

Look for a spot that's convenient and sensible — our inlet-box-and-cord guide helps you evaluate the answer.

Q: Is my panel in good shape for this, or does it need work first?

An honest assessment here matters. If they flag panel work, ask them to explain it plainly.

✓ Clear answers are the goal

You're not testing their knowledge so much as their ability to explain it to you. Clear, patient answers are a great sign.

'Will you walk me through using it?'

This question ensures you end up confident, not just wired up.

Ask whether they'll walk you through operating the switch, hands-on, before they leave — starting the generator, connecting, flipping the switch, bringing up circuits, and switching back. A good electrician says yes gladly. This end-of-visit walk-through is the single most valuable few minutes of the whole project, so make sure it's part of the deal. Our installation-day guide covers what that walk-through should include.

★ I like to be there for that

If you'd like, I'll join for the walk-through so I learn your setup and can refresh you anytime after. Call (330) 200-8042.

Ask about the timeline

Knowing the schedule helps you plan — especially the inspection.

Ask when they could do the work, how long it will take, and when the inspection would happen (same day or later). Also ask roughly how long your power will be off during the install, so you can plan around it — and mention any medical equipment up front. A clear timeline lets you avoid scheduling the install right before a forecasted storm and know when your project is truly complete.

✓ Don't schedule against a storm

Give the install and inspection room to finish before storm season, so you're never caught mid-project during an actual outage.

Contractor red flags

A few warning signs mean keep looking, no matter how friendly the pitch.

- **Cagey about the license** or unwilling to show proof.
- **Offers to skip the permit** to save money or time.
- **Won't put the quote in writing** or demands a big deposit up front.
- **Pressures you to decide today** or discourages other quotes.
- **Showed up uninvited** (door-knocking) with a 'special deal.'

! Pressure and secrecy are the big ones

Honest pros give you time, put things in writing, and welcome questions. Pressure, vagueness, or permit-dodging are your cue to walk away.

Get more than one opinion

Comparing a few electricians is the simplest way to hire well.

Talk to two or three licensed electricians, ask each the same questions, and get each to quote the same scope in writing. This shows you the fair range of price and approach, and it lets you compare not just cost but how well each explains the work and how comfortable you feel with them. Comfort matters — you're letting this person into your home and trusting them with your family's safety.

✓ Comfort counts, not just price

Pick the electrician you understand and trust, not just the cheapest. The right fit is worth a little more.

Trust your gut — and guard against scams

I help a lot of seniors, and I want you to feel empowered here.

If something feels off — the pressure, the vagueness, a price that seems too good, an uninvited visitor — trust that feeling and slow down. You are never obligated to decide on the spot, sign anything, or let anyone start work. It's completely fine to say 'I need to think about it' or 'I want a second opinion,' and hang up or close the door. Honest professionals respect that; scammers hate it. When in doubt, bring in a family member or call me.

! You can always say 'not today'

You never owe anyone an immediate yes. 'I need to think about it and get another quote' is a complete, reasonable answer — always.

A question checklist to bring

Copy these onto paper and take them to each quote visit.

- ☐ Are you a licensed electrician, and are you insured? (Ask for proof.)
- ☐ How much experience do you have with transfer switches — and well pumps, if I have one?
- ☐ Will you pull the permit and arrange the inspection?
- ☐ Can I get a written, itemized quote including the permit?
- ☐ Will you walk me through operating it before you leave, and when could you do the work?

★ I'll help you prepare

Want to go into these conversations ready? I'll help you with the questions and what good answers sound like. Call (330) 200-8042.

Common hiring mistakes

A few missteps to avoid when choosing an electrician.

- **Hiring the first or cheapest** without comparing or checking a license.
- **Skipping references** and reviews.
- **Accepting a verbal-only quote** that's hard to hold anyone to.
- **Feeling rushed** into a decision by a persuasive pitch.
- **Ignoring your gut** when something feels off.

! Cheapest isn't the goal

The lowest quote can hide a missing permit, cut corners, or inexperience. Hire on trust, license, and clarity — not just price.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about hiring an electrician.

Q: How do I know an electrician is qualified for this?

Confirm they're licensed and insured, ask about their transfer-switch experience, check references, and make sure they'll pull the permit. Clear, unhurried answers are a good sign.

Q: What's the biggest red flag?

Offering to skip the permit, being cagey about a license, or pressuring you to decide fast. Any of these means keep looking.

Q: Should I get more than one quote?

Yes — get two or three written quotes for the same scope. It shows the fair range and lets you compare approach and comfort, not just price.

Q: What if I feel pressured or unsure?

Trust that feeling. You never have to decide on the spot. Say you need to think about it and get another opinion — or call me to talk it through.

★ Want help vetting someone?

Call or text (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you evaluate an electrician or point you to one I trust.

How I help you hire well

Finding and vetting a good electrician is one of the most valuable things I do — with nothing to sell you.

I'll help you prepare your questions, understand the answers, and compare electricians fairly. Better yet, I keep a short list of licensed electricians in the area I trust and can help connect you with the right one for your home. I earn no referral fees — my only interest is that you get a safe, honest install from someone dependable. And I'm glad to sit in on the quote visit if you'd like a friendly second set of ears.

★ A trusted introduction

Sometimes the best help is knowing who to call. Reach me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll point you to a licensed electrician I trust.

The value of a trusted local pro

A good electrician isn't just for installation day — they're a relationship worth having.

The electrician who installs your transfer switch is who you'll call if it ever needs service, if you want to add a circuit later, or for other electrical work down the road. So it's worth building that relationship with someone local, licensed, and trustworthy. A pro who did right by you once, explained things patiently, and stood behind their work is exactly the person you want in your contacts for years to come.

✓ You're hiring for the long run

Think of this as choosing your electrician, not just this job. The right one becomes a trusted resource for years.

The short version to carry with you

If the details blur, hold onto these.

- ❑ Confirm licensed and insured; ask about transfer-switch (and well-pump) experience.
- ❑ Make sure they'll pull the permit — 'skip it' means walk away.
- ❑ Get written, itemized quotes from two or three, and compare fairly.
- ❑ Ask for a hands-on walk-through, and trust your gut — never feel rushed.

✓ Keep this guide handy

Take the question checklist to each quote visit — keep this guide with your home papers.

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 hiring the right electrician for your transfer switch 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.

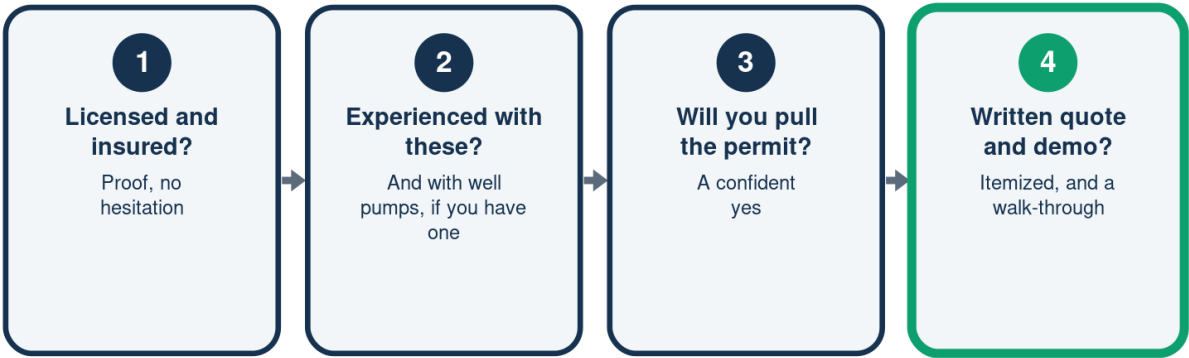
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I don't do the licensed electrical or gas work myself — for that I'll help you line up 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

The Questions That Matter

Ask every electrician these



Clear, unhurried answers are the sign of a pro worth hiring.

Green Lights vs. Red Flags

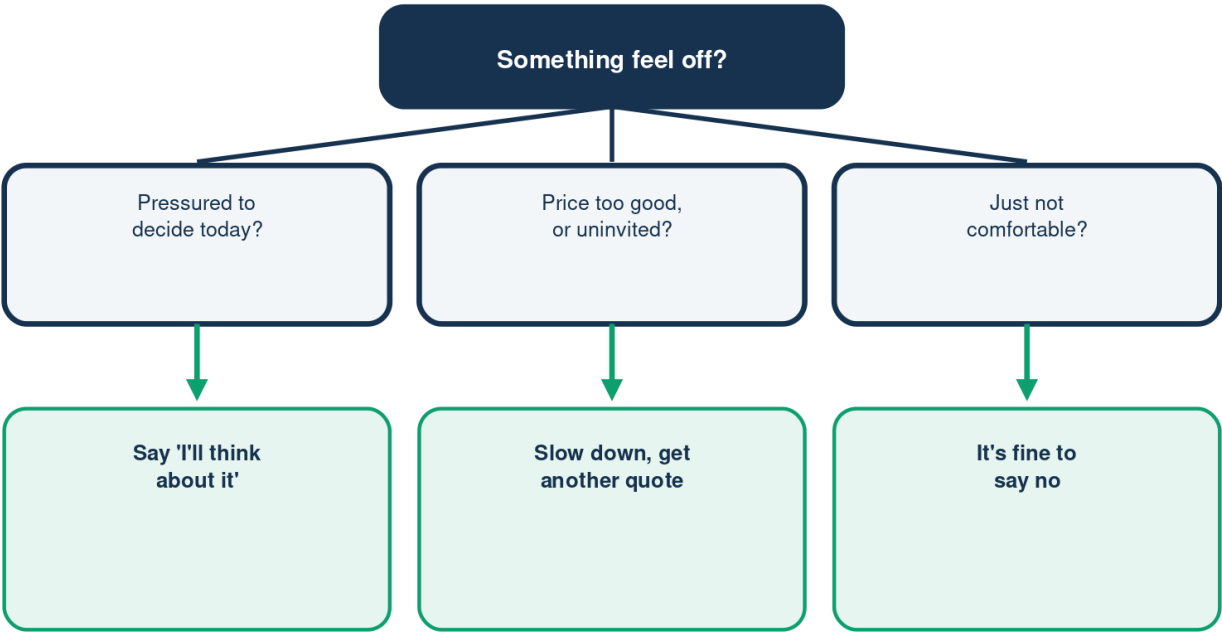
Reading an electrician's answers

	Green light	Red flag
License	Shows proof gladly	Cagey about it
Permit	Pulls it as routine	Offers to skip it
Quote	Written, itemized	Vague, verbal only
Manner	Patient, no rush	Pressures you

Pressure, vagueness, and permit-dodging mean keep looking.

Feeling Unsure? Trust Your Gut

You never owe an immediate yes

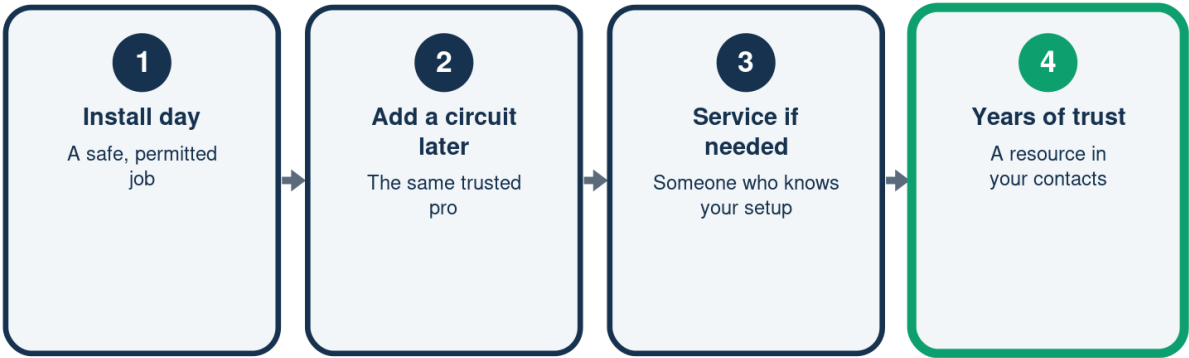


Honest pros respect 'not today' -- scammers hate it. Trust that.

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

Hiring for the Long Run

You're choosing a pro, not just a job



The right electrician becomes a trusted resource for years.



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,
no fine print. That is how I would want to be treated.

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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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