



An Extended Guide · No. 1483

Keeping Phones and Medical Devices Charged With Solar

A caring plan for the essentials

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

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! Read this first — solar is safe, with a few easy habits

Here's the good news first: a portable solar panel is one of the safest ways to make your own power. There's no fuel, no flame, no engine, and no carbon monoxide, so it's welcome right on a patio, a balcony, or the grass — no fumes to worry about. A panel sitting in the sun is still quietly making real electricity, though, so a few gentle habits keep it trouble-free: keep the plugs and connectors dry, never let the two bare metal ends touch each other, and don't use a panel or cable that's cracked, frayed, or chewed. Always plug a portable panel into a power station or battery — never straight into your home's wall outlets or breaker panel. Set it where no one will trip over the cord, and if anything ever looks scorched or feels too hot to touch, unplug it and let it cool. Because someone you love may count on the power we're talking about here, we'll take it slow and build a calm, layered plan together — and I'll show you the safe way to hook everything up.

Let's make a calm plan for the power that matters

When the lights go out, the first worries are the important ones: a charged phone to call for help, and any device that keeps someone well. A portable solar panel and a power station can quietly help with both — as one steady part of a larger, sensible plan.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. For 30-plus years I've helped folks set up their home gear patiently and without the jargon. I'll walk you through this the same way — like a neighbor at your kitchen table, one plain idea at a time.

One thing up front, so you always know where I stand: I'm a tech helper, not a doctor or a nurse. I help you choose, set up, and test the equipment and the safe hookup. Anything about your health or your device's medical settings belongs with your doctor and your equipment supplier, and I'll say so every time it comes up.

★ No question is too small here

If any of this feels heavy, that's understandable — we'll keep it gentle and practical. Want a hand thinking it through for your home? Call or text me at (330) 200-8042. No sales pitch, ever.

The whole plan, on one page

If you remember only these things, you've got the heart of a good, calm backup plan.

- ❑ A panel and a power station can keep phones, a tablet, a lamp, the internet box, and some medical devices going.
- ❑ Treat solar as ONE layer, not the whole plan — it leans on the sun, and the sun comes and goes.
- ❑ Charge the station full from the wall BEFORE a storm. Solar stretches that charge; it doesn't replace it.
- ❑ For any powered medical device, keep the maker's approved battery backups. Oxygen users keep backup tanks that need no power.
- ❑ Register with your utility's medical or priority list, and tell your equipment supplier your backup plan.
- ❑ Ask your doctor or supplier what's safe to run on a battery, and for how long — they know your exact device.
- ❑ If a device fails and backup is low, or someone has trouble breathing, chest pain, confusion, or blue lips — call 911.

✓ The one habit that carries the rest

Charge your power station full from the wall whenever a storm is in the forecast. A full battery on hand is worth more than any amount of sunshine you're hoping for later.

What a panel and station can quietly keep going

Let's start with the reassuring part — the everyday essentials portable solar handles beautifully in an outage.

- **Phones and tablets** — so you can reach family, your doctor, and 911, and look up what you need.
- **A lamp or two** — steady light makes a dark evening feel normal instead of frightening.
- **The internet box and Wi-Fi** — for calls, video visits with a doctor, and staying connected.
- **Charging small health items** — hearing aids, a blood-pressure cuff, a glucose meter, a rechargeable heating pad.
- **Some powered medical devices** — depending on the device and the station; we'll cover how to check that carefully.

✓ Staying reachable comes first

In any outage, a charged phone is the single most valuable thing you can have. A modest panel and station keep it topped up day after day, so you're never cut off when it matters most.

Solar is one layer — a good plan has a few

This is the most important idea in the whole guide, so let's say it plainly and kindly: solar is a wonderful helper, but it isn't a promise.

A solar panel only makes real power when the sun is out. Clouds, a storm, nightfall, and short winter days all cut what it collects. That's exactly why we never lean on solar by itself for anything that truly matters — we stack a few dependable layers instead.

The layers work together: a battery you charged full from the wall ahead of time, the device maker's own approved backups, backup oxygen tanks if you use oxygen, and the solar panel topping things back up whenever the sun cooperates. Our outage game-plan guide lays out that stacked approach in full.

✓ Belt and suspenders, on purpose

Having more than one way to keep the essentials going isn't overkill — it's peace of mind. If one layer runs low, another is already there, and you're never waiting on the weather.

An honest word about powered medical equipment

If you or someone at home depends on a device that plugs in, this page is for you. Let's be careful and clear together.

Powered medical equipment covers things like an oxygen concentrator, a CPAP or BiPAP machine, a nebulizer, a powered wheelchair or scooter, and a small refrigerator that keeps medicine cold. Some of these can run from a good power station; some draw more than others; and a few are simply too important to trust to the sun alone.

So here's the rule I'd want my own family to follow: for anything you truly depend on, keep the device maker's approved battery backups on hand, and treat solar as a way to stretch your reserves — never as the only thing standing between you and going without.

! For life-sustaining equipment, never rely on solar alone

If a device keeps someone breathing or alive, it needs backups that don't depend on the weather: the maker's approved batteries, and for oxygen, tanks that need no power at all. Ask your equipment supplier what backups they recommend, and follow their guidance over anything in this guide.

Fill the tank before the weather turns

This single habit does more for your peace of mind than anything else, and it costs nothing but a little foresight.

When a storm is in the forecast, charge your power station completely from a wall outlet while you still have grid power. A full battery in the house is money in the bank — ready the moment the lights flicker, no sun required.

Then, once the storm passes and the sky brightens, the solar panel goes to work topping that battery back up. That's the right order: the wall charge carries you through the dark, cloudy stretch, and solar refills the reserve for the days that follow.

✓ Make it part of your storm routine

Right alongside filling water jugs and finding the flashlights, add one line to your list: plug in the power station. If it's already full when the power goes out, you start the outage calm and ahead.

If you use oxygen, start with the tanks

Oxygen deserves its own careful page, because it's one place where a no-power backup matters most.

An oxygen concentrator makes oxygen from the air, and it needs electricity to run. A power station may be able to help keep one going for a while, but the sturdiest backup of all is the one that needs no power at all: backup oxygen tanks. Keep them on hand, and ask your supplier how many they recommend for your situation.

With tanks covering your oxygen, solar and the station can look after the other essentials — your phone, a lamp, the internet box — so your reserves last longer where they count.

! Your oxygen supplier is the expert here

Before you count on any battery or panel for a concentrator, call your oxygen supplier. Ask how long you're expected to have backup tanks for, how to switch over, and what they advise for a power outage. Their instructions come first, always.

Two calls worth making today

A little paperwork now can bring real help later. Neither call takes long, and both are free.

First, ask your electric utility whether they keep a medical or priority list. Many do. It's a record of homes where someone relies on powered medical equipment, so the utility knows to keep you in mind. Getting on it is usually a short form or a phone call.

Second, call your equipment supplier — the company that provides your concentrator, CPAP, or other device — and tell them your backup plan. They may offer their own backup batteries, loaner equipment, or specific advice for outages that fits your exact device.

- ☐ Call the electric utility — ask to be added to the medical or priority list.
- ☐ Call your equipment supplier — share your plan and ask what they recommend.
- ☐ Write both phone numbers on a card and keep it where you'll find it in the dark.

Let your doctor and supplier lead on the medical parts

I can help you with the equipment and the hookup. The medical questions belong with the people who know your health and your device.

Your doctor and your equipment supplier can tell you what's genuinely safe to run on a battery, roughly how long you should plan for, and what to do if power is out longer than expected. Those answers depend on you and your specific device, so they're the right people to ask — not a general guide, and not me.

Bring them your plan and ask plainly: what should I have on hand, and when should I stop waiting and get help? Write down what they say and keep it with your outage card. There's no wrong question to ask them.

★ I'll handle the tech, they'll handle the medicine

I'm glad to set up and test your panel and station, and to sit with you while you call your supplier so the tech questions get answered clearly. But I'll always point the health questions back to your doctor — that's the honest way to do it. Call me at (330) 200-8042.

Does the power station suit sensitive devices?

A fair question, and an easy one to check. Sensitive electronics like power that's smooth and steady.

A good power station delivers clean, steady power — the smooth kind that sensitive electronics prefer — which is one reason folks like them for delicate gear. Many medical and electronic devices run happily from a quality station.

That said, don't take my word for your device. The maker of your equipment is the one to confirm it. Check the device's manual or call the maker or supplier and ask whether it's approved to run from a portable battery station. When they say yes, you can proceed with confidence.

✓ One quick question settles it

Ask the device maker or your supplier: is this approved to run from a portable power station? A plain yes or no from them beats any amount of guessing, and it's exactly the kind of call I'm happy to help you make.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Where you live shapes what your backup plan needs to do. A home in town and a farmhouse on a well face different outages — and have different amounts of open sky for solar.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, outages tend to be shorter, and your water keeps flowing from the city main. So the goal is comfort and safety: keeping phones, medical devices, the internet box, and a lamp or two going until the power returns.

- A smaller foldable panel and a modest power station usually cover the essentials nicely.
- A balcony, patio, or driveway is all the room you need to set a panel in the sun.
- Still charge the station full before a storm, and keep your device backups — shorter doesn't mean no outage.
- Get on your utility's medical list even in town; crews reach registered homes with that information in hand.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, outages can run longer, but you have open space and unobstructed sun that's wonderful for solar. Just remember the one thing solar can't do for you out here — the well pump.

- Your well pump is 240-volt and cannot run on a portable panel and station — store drinking water for the outage.
- A larger station and a bigger panel make sense; you have the room and the sun to justify them.
- Solar and a good battery are still a rural blessing: phones, lights, the internet, and medical devices.
- If you use oxygen, keep plenty of backup tanks — longer outages mean you may need more than in town.

★ Not sure which fits your home?

Tell me your setup — city water or a well, how long your outages usually run, and which devices you need to keep going — and I'll help you size a panel and station without overspending. Call (330) 200-8042.

The layers, side by side

Here's the whole plan on one small table, so you can see how each piece backs up the others.

The layer	What it does for you
Charge full first	A full battery, ready before the storm
Device backups	The maker's own approved batteries
Oxygen tanks	No-power backup you can always trust
The power station	Runs the everyday essentials
The solar panel	Refills the station when the sun's out

✓ **No single layer has to be perfect**

Each layer covers a gap in the others. Together they turn an outage from something to dread into something you're simply ready for.

Try the plan before you ever need it

A plan you've practiced once is worth ten you've only read about. A calm afternoon test tells you everything.

Pick a bright day, unplug from the wall on purpose, and run your essentials from the power station for a bit. You'll quickly see what works, how the connections go, and where you'd want a little more reserve — all while help is only a plug-in away.

- ❑ Run each device you care about from the station, one at a time, and confirm it starts and runs.
- ❑ Practice the switch-over so it feels familiar in the dark.
- ❑ Set the panel out in the sun and watch the station's 'solar in' reading climb.
- ❑ Note anything you'd change, then top the station back up from the wall.

★ I'll run the test with you

The first practice run is a lovely thing to do together — I'll make sure the hookup is right, the switch-over is easy, and you feel confident doing it yourself. A first visit is a flat \$99. Call (330) 200-8042.

Keeping the phone and the internet alive

When something goes wrong, being able to call and be called is everything. Solar is very good at protecting exactly that.

Phones sip a little power, so a power station can keep several charged for a long while, and the panel tops the station back up by day. If your phone service leans on home internet, keeping the internet box running lets you make calls and even do a video visit with a doctor.

A few old-fashioned habits help too: keep important numbers written on paper, not just in the phone; keep a car charger handy as another way to top off a phone; and let neighbors or family know your plan so someone can check on you.

✓ Write the numbers down

Doctor, equipment supplier, utility, and a family member or two — on a single card, in big print, kept where you can grab it. A dead phone can't look up a number, but a card in the drawer always can.

Hooking it up safely — the few easy habits

The good news bears repeating: a solar panel is one of the safest ways to make your own power. A handful of gentle habits keep it that way.

Always plug the panel into the power station's solar input — never into a wall outlet or your home's breaker panel. The panel refills the battery, and you run your devices from the battery's own outlets. That's the whole arrangement, and it needs no wiring.

Keep the plugs and connectors dry, don't let the two bare metal ends of a cable touch, and don't use anything cracked or frayed. Set cords so no one trips — doubly important around a walker, a wheelchair, or oxygen tubing.

! Mind the tubing and the cords

Route every cable and cord well clear of where someone walks, and away from oxygen tubing. A snag-free path around the room matters even more when medical gear is in use. Our intro guide covers the safe hookup start to finish.

When the sun doesn't cooperate

Let's be honest about the gray days, because that honesty is what keeps your plan safe.

On a heavy overcast day, a short winter day, or right in the middle of a storm, a panel makes only a fraction of its sunny-day power — sometimes very little. It rarely makes nothing in daylight, but you can't count on it to refill much when the weather is against you.

That's not a flaw; it's just how solar works, and it's the whole reason we charge the station full ahead of time and keep the device maker's backups. Solar refills your reserves when the sun returns — it doesn't carry you through the darkest hours by itself.

✓ Lean on stored power through the gray

Think of the battery as what gets you through the storm, and the panel as what refills it afterward. Our cloudy-day guide goes deeper on what to realistically expect when the sky won't clear.

A calm routine for the moment power goes out

When the lights blink off, a simple routine keeps everyone steady. Here's a gentle order to follow.

- ❑ Check on the person who relies on the equipment first — calm and reassurance come before any gadget.
- ❑ Switch any medical device over to its own approved backup battery or, for oxygen, to a tank.
- ❑ Bring out the power station and start running phones, a lamp, and the internet box from it.
- ❑ When it's daylight and safe, set the panel in the sun to begin refilling the station.
- ❑ Keep your written phone list close, and let a family member know your power is out.

✓ You've already done the hard part

If you charged full ahead of time and kept your backups ready, the outage is just a routine now, not an emergency. Our outage game-plan guide turns this into a checklist you can post on the fridge.

Knowing when the answer isn't a device

Your whole plan is about buying calm and time. But some moments call for help right away, not a gadget — and knowing the difference is part of being ready.

No backup battery, panel, or plan is a substitute for emergency care. If a medical device fails and its backup is running low, don't spend precious minutes troubleshooting equipment — get help coming while you sort the rest out.

! Call 911 right away if you see any of these

Trouble breathing or shortness of breath; chest pain or pressure; sudden confusion; or a bluish or gray color to the lips, face, or fingertips. In any of these, call 911 first — do not wait to fix a device, and do not second-guess yourself. It is always right to call.

Trust your instincts. If something feels wrong and you're not sure, calling for help is never the wrong choice. That's exactly what emergency services are there for.

What I can do — and what I leave to the experts

I want you to know exactly what kind of help I offer, so you always know who to ask for what.

I help you choose a panel and station that fit your home, set them up, and test the whole plan so you're confident using it. I'll make sure the hookup is safe, walk your family through it too, and be a patient voice on the phone when you're ready to buy or set up.

What I don't do is give medical advice. I'm not a doctor, a nurse, or an oxygen specialist. Whether a device is safe to run on a battery, how long to plan for, and what to do about your health in an outage — those go to your doctor and your equipment supplier, every time.

★ Honest help, and honest limits

Knowing the edge of what I should advise on is part of doing this right. I'll set up your gear and cheer you on — and I'll happily sit with you while you call the folks who handle the medical side. Reach me at (330) 200-8042.

Questions to ask the people who know your device

Bring these to your supplier, your doctor, or your utility. Plain questions, plain answers — that's how a good plan comes together.

Q: Is my device approved to run from a portable power station?

Ask the device maker or your supplier directly. A clear yes or no from them decides it — never guess with equipment you rely on.

Q: How long should I plan to have backup for?

Your supplier and doctor can give you a realistic target for your situation, including how many oxygen tanks to keep if you use oxygen.

Q: Does my utility have a medical or priority list?

Call and ask to be added. It tells the utility a home relies on powered medical equipment, which is worth them knowing.

Q: Who will check on me if the power's out a while?

Line up a family member or neighbor in advance, share your plan, and make sure they have your written phone list too.

✓ There's no silly question here

If anyone ever makes you feel rushed or foolish for asking about your own health and safety, that's on them, not you. A patient answer is the least you deserve.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from families planning for someone who relies on power, answered plainly and kindly.

Q: Can I run my oxygen concentrator on solar?

Sometimes a good station can help run one for a while — but never rely on solar or a battery alone for oxygen. Keep backup tanks that need no power, and follow your supplier's guidance first.

Q: What's the very first thing to do before a storm?

Charge the power station full from the wall, and make sure your device backups and oxygen tanks are ready. A full battery in hand beats sun you're only hoping for.

Q: Will a power station's power harm a sensitive device?

A good station gives clean, steady power that sensitive electronics generally like. Even so, confirm with the device maker that yours is approved to run from a portable station.

Q: How do I get on the utility's medical list?

Call your electric utility and ask. It's usually a short form or phone call, and it puts your home on their radar as one that relies on powered medical equipment.

★ Let's build your plan together

Planning power for someone you love is exactly the kind of thing I'm glad to help with — calmly, patiently, and with no pressure. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll make it feel manageable.

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 phones and medical devices charged 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. Most portable solar setups are simple, plug-and-play, and need no wiring at all — but if yours ever calls for a licensed electrician, 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

What Solar Can Help Keep Going

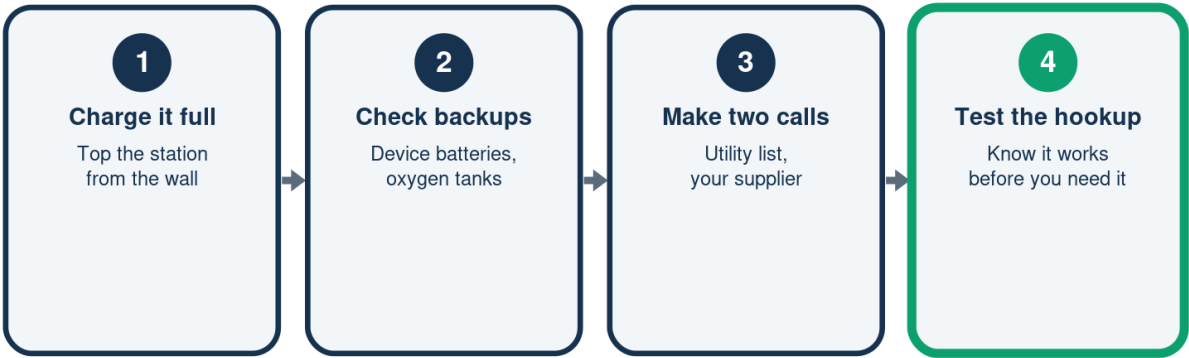
Honest about the everyday and the essential

	Can it help?	The honest answer
Phones and tablets	Yes	Easy for a station
A lamp, the router	Yes	A modest draw
Some medical gear	Maybe	Check the maker
An oxygen machine	Sometimes	Keep backup tanks
A 240V well pump	No	Needs a big system

Solar is one layer -- keep device backups and ask your supplier.

Getting Ready Before a Storm

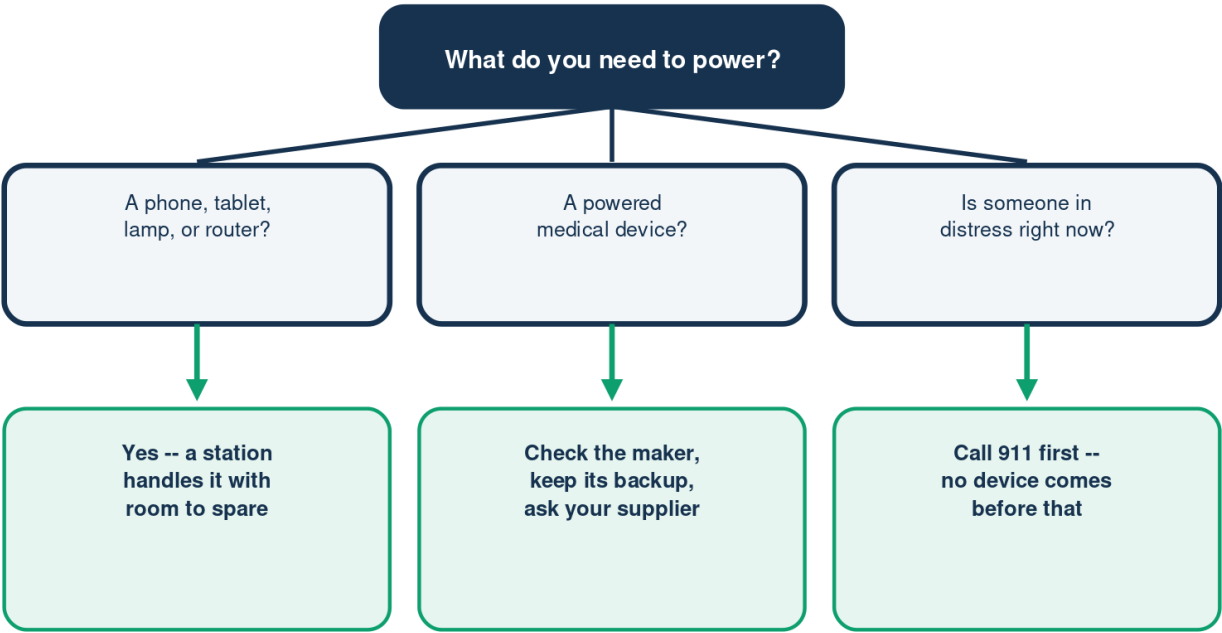
A calm plan, set up in advance



A plan ready in advance beats scrambling in the dark.

Thinking It Through, Device by Device

Let what you need point the way -- gently



Solar is one layer -- your doctor and supplier guide the medical parts.

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

People to Loop In

You don't have to carry the plan alone

	Why tell them	What you get
Your utility	Medical list	On their radar
Your supplier	Your backup plan	Loaner or advice
Your doctor	Device guidance	What's safe to run
A neighbor	A hand nearby	Someone checks in

A few calls now turn an outage into something you're ready for.



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@BillsHomeTech.com · Mon–Sat 9:00 AM – 7:30 PM

— 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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