



An Extended Guide · No. 1462

Storm Readiness: Your Solar Generator Game Plan

Before, during, and after — a
calm plan for the next outage

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✓ The best news first — this one is safe indoors

Here is the best news about a solar generator, and the reason it earns a place in your home: despite the word 'generator,' it has no engine. At its heart is a big rechargeable battery in a case — a power station — and the panels simply refill it from the sun. It burns no fuel, so it gives off no exhaust and no carbon monoxide — the invisible, deadly gas that makes a gas generator a strictly outdoors-only machine. That means the power station part is safe to use right inside your home, in any room, with the windows closed — beside your chair, on the nightstand, next to a medical device. (The panels sit outside in the sun; the station stays indoors where it is dry.) A few simple habits keep it that way: charge it with the gear it came with, give it a little air while it works (don't bury it under a blanket or shut it in a tight cabinet), keep it away from water and from baking heat, and never use one that is cracked, soaked, or swollen. When a storm rolls through, that is exactly the moment it shines: you never have to step out into the wind and rain to start your power — you ride the whole thing out, warm and dry, right inside your home.

A calm plan for riding out the next storm

A storm is a lot less frightening when you've thought it through on a quiet day beforehand. With a charged solar generator and a simple plan, you already know what to do the moment the lights flicker out — what to plug in, what to leave be, and how to keep going until the power comes back. This guide helps you build that plan, one calm step at a time.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. In 30-plus years of helping folks with the gear in their homes, I've learned that the difference between a scary night and a manageable one is almost always a little planning done ahead of time. Think of this as the two of us sitting at your kitchen table, writing out your storm plan together.

You don't need to be a prepper or handy with tools. Most of this you do once, on a calm afternoon, and then simply keep ready. We'll walk through the three easy parts — before the storm, during the outage, and after the power's back — and by the end you'll have a plan that does the worrying for you.

★ Nothing to sell you here

I don't sell solar generators, panels, or anything else, and I earn no commission, so this is honest help with no angle. If you'd like a hand building your storm plan or sizing your backup, call or text me at (330) 200-8042 — the conversation's free.

Before, during, and after — on one page

If you remember only these things, you already have a solid storm plan built around your solar generator.

- ❑ Before: keep it charged and topped up, with the panels, cables, and wall charger together in one spot.
- ❑ Before: write a short must-run list, charge your phones and device batteries, and — on a well — store drinking water.
- ❑ During: run it safely indoors — the storm advantage — and take care of safety and any medical needs first.
- ❑ During: keep the fridge and freezer closed, keep the internet on, and harvest solar by day when it's bright and safe.
- ❑ After: recharge the unit back to full, wipe down and store the panels, and note anything you'd restock or change.
- ❑ Medical needs are one layer, not the whole plan; and any gas generator you run stays outdoors only, because of carbon monoxide.

✓ One line to hold onto

Charge it, list it, and keep the kit together — do that on a calm day, and the stormy night mostly takes care of itself.

Before: keep it charged and topped up

The single most important step happens long before any storm cloud shows up: a solar generator that's charged and ready. An empty one in a far closet helps no one.

Keep it topped up. Many folks leave the station plugged into the wall so it sits full and ready, or set a reminder to charge it every so often. A battery slowly loses a little charge just sitting there, so an occasional top-up from the wall is part of the routine. The wall is your rain-or-shine charge — reliable no matter what the sky is doing.

When the forecast turns rough, give it a final top-off. If you know a storm is coming tomorrow, plug the station in tonight and send it into the weather completely full. That last little top-up is free insurance, and it's the easiest thing in this whole guide to get right.

✓ A full battery is the foundation

Everything else in this plan rests on one thing: the station being charged when the lights go out. Pick a habit — always plugged in, or topped up on the first of the month — and top it off again whenever a storm is in the forecast.

Before: keep the whole kit in one spot

A solar generator is really a little team — the station, the panels, the cables, and the wall charger. When a storm hits, you want all of it in one place, not scattered around the house.

Pick one home for everything: the station where you'll use it, and right beside it the folded panels, the solar cable that joins them to the station, and the wall charger. Add a flashlight or a small lamp to the same spot. That way, when the power quits and the room goes dark, you reach for one place and have everything you need.

While you're at it, learn how to set the panels up before you ever need them in a hurry. Unfold them once on a sunny afternoon, run the cable to the station, and watch it start to refill. Doing it once in the calm means you won't be puzzling over cables in the wind. Our sun-and-weather guide goes deeper on getting the most from the panels.

- **The station** — kept indoors, dry, and within easy reach.
- **The panels and solar cable** — folded and stored together, ready to carry out.
- **The wall charger** — your rain-or-shine way to fill it back up.
- **A lamp or flashlight** — so you can find and set up the rest in the dark.

✓ One spot, everything together

The middle of a storm is no time to hunt for a cable. Keep the station, panels, charger, and a flashlight in one known place, and setting up becomes a one-trip job.

Before: make your must-run list

Deciding what to power while you're calm and the lights are on takes all the guesswork out of a dark, stressful moment. A little list is worth a great deal.

Walk through your home on a quiet day and ask yourself, 'If the power were out, what would I truly want running?' Write it down. For most folks it's a short, comforting list: phones, the internet box, a lamp or two, and maybe a CPAP at night, with the fridge nursed along in turns.

Keep it honest, and put it in order of importance, so if power gets tight you know what comes first. Leave the big heat-makers off it — space heaters, hair dryers, the microwave — because a solar generator isn't built to carry those anyway. Our outage-essentials guide goes deeper on what belongs on the list and what doesn't.

★ Bring me your list

That little must-run list is the heart of the whole plan — and it's just what tells us whether your solar generator is the right size. Jot it down and text me a photo, and I'll help you check it. (330) 200-8042.

Before: charge everything the day the storm's coming

When the forecast turns, a little topping-up the day ahead means you step into the outage with everything already full.

Charge your phones and tablets to full, and top off any device that runs on its own battery — a hearing-aid charger, a medical-alert base, a spare phone battery, a rechargeable lamp. Every one of those you fill ahead of time is one less draw on the solar generator once the power's out, and it means your phone is ready if you need to call for help.

If your water comes from a well, this is the day to store water, too. A well pump runs on electricity, so when the power quits, your water stops — for drinking, cooking, and flushing. Fill some clean jugs for drinking and a few larger containers for washing and flushing, sized to how long your outages tend to run. It's the simplest, surest part of a rural storm plan.

! On a well, water comes first

Don't count on the solar generator to run the pump — a 240-volt well pump is more than a portable unit can carry. Count on stored water instead. It's the one preparation rural folks most often skip and most often wish they hadn't.

Before: plan your medical layers

If someone in the home depends on a powered device, a solar generator is a real comfort in a storm — but it should be one layer of a plan, never the whole of it.

A solar generator's quiet, clean, indoor-safe power is gentle on sensitive equipment and wonderful for a CPAP overnight or for charging a device's own batteries. But a battery can run down, and a storm can knock the power out for longer than anyone expects, so it shouldn't be your only safeguard. Build in more than one layer, so no single thing failing leaves you stranded.

Talk with the device's supplier about backup batteries, and, for oxygen, backup tanks that need no power at all. Ask your electric utility whether they keep a medical-needs registry, which can mean priority attention during an outage. Keep those numbers with your written plan. Our medical-equipment guide walks through all of this in detail.

! For medical needs, build layers

I'm a tech helper, not a medical professional, so I'll say this plainly: for anything a person's health depends on, one battery is never enough. Layer your backups, register with the utility, and make the plan together with the device maker and the doctor. See the medical-equipment guide, and please don't lean on any single device.

During: your indoor-safe storm advantage

Here's where a solar generator really earns its keep. When the storm is at its worst, you don't have to go anywhere near it.

A gas generator has to live outdoors and be started outside, because its engine gives off carbon monoxide — an invisible, deadly gas. That means pulling on a raincoat, heading out into the wind, and fussing with a cord while the weather howls. A solar generator asks none of that. It's a battery with no engine and no exhaust, so it sits right in your living room and runs quietly beside you while the storm passes.

So during the outage, you simply switch it on and plug in your essentials, all from the comfort of a dry, familiar room. No stepping outside, no fumes, no carbon monoxide to worry about — just quiet power where you're sitting. For many folks, that's the whole reason a solar generator feels so reassuring when the weather turns.

! Keep the station dry

Indoor-safe is the point — so keep it indoors. The station belongs in a dry room, away from leaks, damp basements, and rain blowing through an open door or window. Only the panels go outside in the weather. Never use a station that has gotten wet, cracked, or swollen.

During: power the important things first

A solar generator holds a fixed amount of power, so a storm outage is about spending it wisely. A simple order of priorities keeps you calm and safe.

Think in three tiers, in this order. First, safety and medical: a medical device, a way to charge phones so you can call for help, and enough light to move around safely. Next, keeping food cold: giving the fridge or freezer a turn to hold its temperature. Last, comfort: a fan, a television for the weather news, a little more light.

Keep the internet on through all of it if you can — your Wi-Fi router and modem sip almost nothing and keep you connected to news, family, and help, and they can keep a cordless-phone base or a medical-alert base working. Small, vital things like those belong right near the top.

Priority	What it covers
1. Safety and medical	Medical device, phones, some light
2. Keep food cold	The fridge and freezer, in turns
3. Comfort	A fan, the news, extra light

✓ **Safety first, comfort last**

When power's tight, work down the tiers in order. Nobody regrets keeping the phones charged and the medical device running; you can always add comfort back once you know the essentials are covered.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

The same storm plan shifts a bit depending on where you live, because outages and water work differently in town than out on a well. Here's how your game plan changes.

If you live in town or the suburbs

Close to town, or in an apartment or condo, storms tend to knock the power out for a shorter spell, and your city water keeps flowing whether the power is on or not. Your plan is mostly about comfort and staying connected for a few hours.

- A charged solar generator easily covers the essentials — phones, the internet, a lamp, a CPAP — through a typical short outage, quietly and indoors.
- You'll usually recharge from the wall once the grid comes back; the panels are a nice bonus for the rare long one.
- Where a gas generator isn't allowed, like most apartments, the solar generator may be your whole backup — and a fine one.
- Keep the plan simple: charge it, list your essentials, and know where the kit and a flashlight are.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, plan for more. Storms tend to leave you without power longer, and when it quits your well pump quits too — so water and refilling both move to the top of the list.

- Store drinking water ahead of time, because a solar generator can't run a 240-volt well pump — that stays a gas generator's job.
- Plan to harvest solar by day, since a rural storm outage can easily outlast a single charge.
- Pair it with a gas generator: the solar unit runs the quiet essentials indoors, the gas unit handles the pump and heavy loads outdoors.
- Keep more of everything — water, charged devices, a plan to reach help — since the roads and the line crews are farther away.

★ Not sure which camp you're in?

Plenty of homes sit in between. Tell me your setup — city water or a well, how long your outages usually run — and I'll help you shape a storm plan that fits, and size any backup without overspending. Call (330) 200-8042.

During: keep the fridge and freezer closed

Food is one of the biggest storm worries, and the good news is that a little discipline and a solar generator handle it well.

The first rule costs nothing: keep the doors shut. Kept closed, a refrigerator holds food safely for about four hours, and a full freezer for about forty-eight — around twenty-four if it's only half full. Every peek lets the cold pour out, so decide what you want before you open the door, and close it quickly.

A solar generator can nurse a fridge or freezer along in turns, since they run on and off anyway. Give it a run to pull the temperature back down, then let it rest while you power other things, then run it again. If perishable food climbs above forty degrees for more than a couple of hours, though, don't risk it — when in doubt, throw it out.

✓ A cheap thermometer earns its keep

An inexpensive fridge thermometer takes the guesswork out of it. You'll know at a glance whether the food is still in the safe range, instead of wondering — especially handy after a long storm night.

During: harvest solar while it's safe and bright

For a long storm outage, refilling the station along the way is what turns a fixed battery into power that keeps on going.

Once the worst of the storm has passed and it's safe to step out, set your panels in the brightest spot you can and run the cable to the station. Through the daylight hours they'll refill the battery for free while you go about things. Aim them toward the sun and nudge them once or twice as it crosses the sky for the best result.

- **Wait for a safe moment.** Don't set up panels while it's still storming — wind, lightning, and wet ground aren't worth it.
- **Expect less on a gray day.** Solar works best in direct sun; a drizzly day only trickles power back in. That's why the wall charge matters beforehand.
- **Conserve as it runs long.** Run loads in turns, unplug what you're not using, and keep the heat-makers off the unit entirely.

Our sun-and-weather guide sets honest expectations for what the panels really give you on different kinds of days — it's worth a read before you lean on solar in an outage.

✓ Harvest by day, spend by night

Treat daylight as your chance to gather power: refill hard while the sun's up, ease your draw after dark. Work with the day and the battery goes a lot further.

After: get back to ready

When the power comes back, a few quick steps get you set for the next storm — because the next one never sends much warning.

First, recharge the station all the way back to full from the wall, and return it to its ready spot. It's tempting to leave it half-empty in the corner once the crisis passes, but a storm season rarely brings just one storm. Top it off while you're thinking of it, so it's ready the moment the sky darkens again.

Then make a quick restock note. Did you run low on drinking water, batteries, or flashlight power? Was there a device you wished you'd charged ahead of time? Jot it on your plan and pick the items up this week, while it's fresh, instead of discovering the gap during the next outage.

✓ Recharge before you relax

The very first thing to do when the lights come back is plug the station in to refill. Do it right away, and you're never caught with an empty battery when the next storm rolls through.

After: put the panels away and note what you learned

Two more small steps close the loop and make every storm easier than the last.

Wipe the panels down and fold them away with their cable, back in the one spot where the whole kit lives. A quick wipe of any rain spots, dust, or grass keeps them working their best, and putting them straight back means you'll never hunt for them next time. Give the station a wipe too, and coil its cords neatly beside it.

Then take five quiet minutes to note what you learned. Did the battery last as long as you hoped? Was anything not on your must-run list that you wished you'd planned for? Did you have enough water, enough light, enough charge? Those small notes are how a good plan quietly becomes a great one.

✓ Every storm is a free rehearsal

The best-prepared folks treat each outage as practice. A few honest notes afterward — and a quick fix to the plan — mean the next storm goes even smoother. You're building a habit, not just weathering a night.

Pairing with a gas generator on a well

For rural homes and long storm outages, the calmest plan of all often isn't a solar generator or a gas generator — it's both, each doing what it does best.

Let the solar generator handle the quiet indoor essentials: the phones, the internet, the lamps, a CPAP, the fridge in turns — all silently and safely inside, day and night, with no fumes to worry about. It asks nothing of you but a charge.

Let the gas generator handle the heavy lifting a battery simply can't: the 240-volt well pump, and other big loads. Fire it up outdoors when you need to fill your water containers or run something large, then shut it down and let the quiet solar unit carry the rest of the day and the night. Our outage-essentials guide covers which loads fall into which camp.

! The gas generator stays outside, always

A gas generator's exhaust carries carbon monoxide — an invisible, deadly gas — so it must run outdoors only, well away from doors and windows, never in a garage or on a porch, even during a storm. The solar generator is the one that's safe inside. Keep those two roles straight and you get the best of both, safely.

Your printable storm-readiness checklist

Here's the whole plan as a checklist. Tear this page out, tick each box on a calm day, and you're ready for whatever the sky brings.

Before the storm

- ☐ The station is charged and topped off, with a final top-up when a storm is in the forecast.
- ☐ The panels, solar cable, wall charger, and a flashlight all live together in one known spot.
- ☐ My must-run list is written down and in order of importance.
- ☐ Phones, tablets, and device batteries are charged ahead of the storm.
- ☐ On a well: drinking and washing water is stored.
- ☐ Medical layers are in place — backups, the utility registry, and the device maker's number on my plan.

During and after

- ☐ During: run it indoors, cover safety and medical first, then food, then comfort; keep the fridge and freezer closed.
- ☐ During: keep the internet on, harvest solar on a safe, bright day, and conserve as the outage runs long.
- ☐ After: recharge to full, wipe down and store the panels, and note anything to restock or change.

★ Want me to help you fill it in?

If you'd like a hand working through this checklist for your own home — and making sure your solar generator is sized for your must-run list — that's just the sort of visit I love. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

What a storm day looks like with one

To see how it all fits together, here's how a typical outage day tends to go once your plan is in place.

The forecast warns of a big storm, so the night before you top off the station, charge every phone and device, and — on a well — fill your water containers. Everything's already in its one spot, so there's nothing to hunt for when the time comes.

The power goes out during the storm. You switch the station on right where you're sitting, plug in a lamp and your phones, and keep any medical device running — all without stepping outside. You keep the fridge closed, leave the internet on, and settle in, calm and dry, while the weather does its worst.

By the next morning the storm has cleared. You carry the panels out into the bright, calm air and let them refill the station while you run your essentials in turns. When the grid finally returns, you recharge the unit to full, wipe down and store the panels, and jot a note or two for next time. An emergency became an inconvenience — because you had a plan.

✓ The plan does the worrying

Notice how little of that day was stressful. That's the whole point: the thinking happened on a calm afternoon, so the stormy night just followed the steps you'd already set.

Common storm-day mistakes

A few avoidable slip-ups undo an otherwise good plan. Now you'll see them coming.

- **An uncharged station.** The number-one letdown — a flat battery in the closet helps nobody. Keep it topped up, and top it off before a storm.
- **A scattered kit.** Panels in the garage, cable who-knows-where. Keep it all in one spot so setting up is a single trip.
- **No must-run list.** Deciding what matters in the dark, under stress, wastes power and forgets essentials.
- **Running heat-makers.** A space heater or hair dryer drains the whole battery fast, or won't run at all.
- **No stored water on a well.** The pump goes down with the power, and the solar generator can't run it — so water must be put by ahead.
- **A gas generator too close to the house.** Its exhaust is deadly. It runs outdoors only, well away from doors and windows.

! The mistake behind most of the others

Nearly every storm regret traces back to not having a plan made on a calm day. Ten quiet minutes ahead of time prevents almost all of these — that's the whole reason for this guide.

Questions to ask yourself

Run through these on a calm day, and any gaps in your storm plan will show themselves while they're still easy to fix.

- Is my solar generator charged right now, and do I know where it and the whole kit are?
- What's on my must-run list, and is it in order of importance?
- How would I refill it if a storm outage lasted more than a day?
- Am I on a well — and if so, do I have water stored?
- Does anyone here depend on a medical device, and are there backups beyond the station?
- If I'd use a gas generator too, do I know it runs outdoors only?
- Have I ever actually practiced setting up the panels?

★ We can answer these together

If any of these give you pause, that's normal, and it's exactly what I'm here for. A short chat usually closes the gaps and puts your mind at ease. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

Put your plan where everyone can find it

A plan does the most good where the whole household can find it. The fridge door is the perfect home for it.

Once your checklist and must-run list are filled in, tape them somewhere obvious — the fridge, the inside of a cabinet door, wherever folks look first. In a storm, anyone can walk up and follow the steps, even if you're not the one home, and even by flashlight.

Add the numbers that matter right on the sheet: the power company, your medical-device supplier, a trusted neighbor or family member, and mine. And if winter storms are your worry, our cold-weather guide covers the extra steps that freezing temperatures call for. When the plan and the numbers live in one obvious place, a stormy night has a calm, clear starting point.

✓ Where everyone can see it

The best plan, tucked in a drawer nobody remembers, is no plan at all. On the fridge, in plain sight, it quietly reassures the whole house — and it's right there the moment the lights flicker.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from folks getting storm-ready with a solar generator, answered plainly.

Q: What's the first thing to do when a storm knocks the power out?

Stay calm and work your plan: switch on the charged station right where you're sitting, and plug in the top of your must-run list — a medical device, phones, and a lamp. Because it's safe indoors, you never have to step out into the weather.

Q: Can I really run it inside during a storm?

Yes — that's its big advantage. It's a battery, not an engine, so there are no fumes and no carbon monoxide. Just keep it in a dry room, away from leaks and blowing rain. Only the panels go outside in the sun.

Q: How do I make it last through a long storm outage?

Run loads in turns instead of all at once, keep the heat-makers off it, keep the fridge and freezer closed, and harvest solar on a safe, bright day. Together those stretch the battery a long way.

Q: I'm on a well — can it keep my water running?

No. A well pump is usually 240-volt with a big starting surge, more than a portable solar generator can carry — that's a gas generator's job, run outdoors. The right move is to store water ahead of the storm.

Q: Should I have a gas generator too?

On a well or for long outages, many folks are happiest with both: the solar unit for quiet indoor essentials, and a gas generator — run outdoors only — for the well pump and heavy loads. See the outage-essentials guide for what falls where.

★ Still have a question?

That's what I'm here for, and there's never a silly one. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll give you a straight, friendly answer.

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 getting storm-ready with a solar generator 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 licensed electrical work myself — for anything that needs to be wired into your home, 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

Your Storm Game Plan

Before, during, and after, in four steps



Prepare on a calm day, ride out the storm, then get set for next time.

Your Storm-Ready Kit

What to have ready, and why

	Have ready	Why
Charged unit	Full and handy	Runs it all
Panels, cables	In one spot	Free refills
Must-run list	Written down	No guessing
Stored water	Jugs put by	Pump will quit

A charged unit, the kit together, a written list, and water on a well.

Town vs. Out on a Well

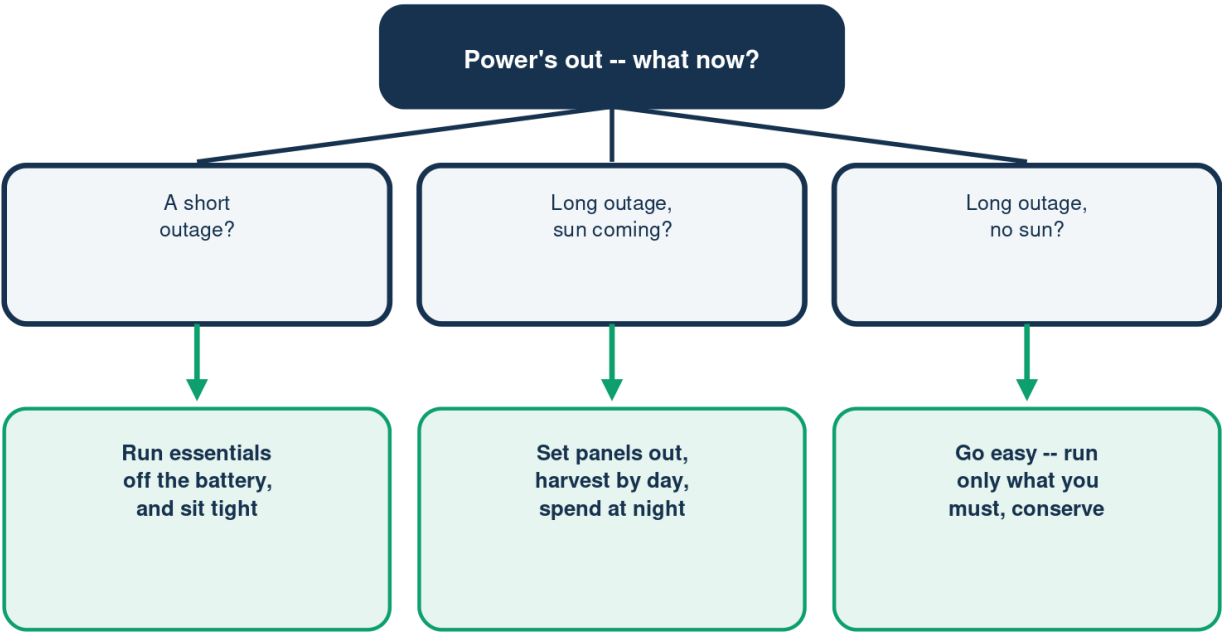
The same storm, two kinds of homes

	In town	Out on a well
Outage length	Usually short	Often long
Water	City main	Store water
The plan	Essentials	More layers
Add a gas gen	Rarely	For the pump

In town, cover the essentials; on a well, store water and add a gas gen.

Power's Out -- What Now?

Let the outage point the way



Any gas generator you run stays outdoors only -- carbon monoxide is deadly.

Match your moves to the storm and the battery goes a long way.



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.

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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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