



An Extended Guide · No. 1584

Choosing a Solar Installer for Your Inverter

Vetting the pro who puts it
all together, in plain English

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

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! Read this first — two honest truths about solar inverters

Two honest truths before we start, because they surprise a lot of good folks. First, the inverter is the brains of your solar system, and it ties straight into your home's electrical panel — so choosing one, replacing one, or adding a battery to it is a professional job. It takes a licensed installer, a building permit, and your utility's approval to connect (called interconnection). This guide is here to help you understand and choose wisely; it is not a do-it-yourself project, and I never want you opening a solar inverter or an electrical panel yourself. Second, a plain grid-tied inverter shuts itself off during a power outage, even in bright sunshine, so it cannot put electricity onto the lines while the crews are repairing them. If keeping the lights on during an outage matters to you, you will want a hybrid or battery-capable inverter and a battery — and we will talk about that plainly. Since the install ties your inverter into your panel and the grid, choosing the right installer is as important as choosing the right equipment.

The choice that matters as much as the gear

Folks agonize over which inverter to buy, but the installer who puts it in matters just as much. A great inverter installed poorly is a headache; a sensible one installed well serves you for decades. This guide helps you choose an installer you can trust.

I'm Bill, of Bill's Home Tech in Portage County. I don't sell solar and I don't do the rooftop or licensed electrical work myself — what I do is help you understand your options, ask installers the right questions, and line up a trustworthy local pro. Consider this guide me helping you interview them.

You wouldn't hire a contractor for your kitchen without a few checks, and solar deserves the same care. The good news is that a handful of sensible questions and checks will tell you most of what you need to know.

★ I'll help you vet them

Weighing installers or quotes? That's exactly what I love to help with — no commission, no dog in the fight. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll size them up together.

Choosing an installer, on one page

The essentials, if you remember nothing else.

- ❑ The installer matters as much as the equipment — a good install lasts decades.
- ❑ Check licensing, insurance, and a real local track record with references.
- ❑ Get more than one quote, and compare what's actually included.
- ❑ Ask about their workmanship warranty and who handles service down the road.
- ❑ Watch for red flags: high pressure, vague answers, and deals too good to be true.
- ❑ A trustworthy installer welcomes your questions and explains things plainly.

✓ The one-sentence takeaway

Pick a licensed, insured, local installer with good references and a solid workmanship warranty — and never let anyone rush or pressure you.

Why the installer is so important

It helps to see just how much rides on getting this right.

Your installer chooses and sizes the inverter and system for your roof, wires it safely into your electrical panel, ties it to the grid, pulls the permits, and handles the utility approval. They also stand behind the workmanship and are usually who you'll call for service over the years. That's a long, important relationship.

A skilled installer makes all of that smooth and safe; a careless one can leave you with shade the design ignored, a poorly placed inverter, or problems that surface years later. The equipment matters, but the hands that install it and stand behind it matter just as much.

✓ You're choosing a relationship

You're not just buying a system — you're choosing who'll look after it for years. Weigh the installer the way you'd weigh a long-term partner, not just a price.

The basic checks that matter

Start with these — they filter out most of the risk.

- **Licensing:** proper electrical and contractor licensing for solar work in your area.
- **Insurance:** liability and workers' compensation, so you're not exposed if something goes wrong.
- **Local track record:** a real, established presence in the area, not a here-today company.
- **References:** recent local customers you can actually talk to.
- **Reputation:** honest reviews and standing with local consumer resources.

None of this is hard to ask about, and a good installer will answer gladly. If any of it is met with dodging or discomfort, treat that as useful information. You have every right to confirm who you're hiring.

Get more than one quote

One quote tells you a price; several tell you the truth.

Getting two or three quotes lets you compare not just price but approach — what inverter type each recommends for your roof, how they handle your shade, what's included, and how they explain it all. Real differences in the recommendations are worth understanding, and often reveal who studied your roof and who used a template.

Compare what's actually included, not just the bottom line: equipment, the inverter and its warranty, monitoring, permits, the utility approval, and any extras. A slightly higher quote that includes more, from a stronger installer, can be the better value. Our whole-home-solar guide on reading a quote helps you compare fairly.

★ I'll compare quotes with you

Two or three quotes can be hard to line up side by side. Bring them to me and I'll help you see what each really includes — plainly, with no stake in which you pick. Call (330) 200-8042.

Ask about the workmanship warranty

Beyond the equipment's warranty, the installer makes their own promise — know it.

The manufacturer warranties the inverter and panels; the installer warranties their work — the wiring, the mounting, the labor. A strong workmanship warranty means that if an installation problem shows up down the road, they'll make it right. Ask how long it runs and exactly what it covers.

This matters especially for service years from now. When the inverter eventually needs replacing, or if a problem crops up, you want an installer who's still around and stands behind their work. Our warranties guide covers the equipment side alongside this.

✓ Two promises to weigh

A great system needs both a solid equipment warranty and a solid workmanship warranty from an installer who'll be around to honor it. Ask about both.

Red flags to watch for

A few warning signs should make you slow down or walk away.

- **High-pressure sales:** 'today only' deals, or pushing you to sign on the spot.
- **Too good to be true:** promises or prices far out of line with everyone else.
- **Vague on outage behavior:** dodging the plain question of whether you'll have power in a blackout.
- **Door-to-door pressure:** unsolicited sales that rush you toward a signature.
- **No clear licensing or local references:** or discomfort when you ask.

A trustworthy installer is patient, answers plainly, and is glad to let you take your time and get other quotes. Pressure is the opposite of that — and a big purchase you'll live with for decades is exactly the wrong thing to rush.

Never let anyone rush you

This deserves its own page, because pressure is the most common way folks get a bad deal.

Solar is a big, long-term purchase, and any honest installer knows it. A good one will give you time to think, welcome your other quotes, and never make you feel foolish for asking questions or sleeping on it. 'The price is only good today' is a pressure tactic, not a favor.

If you ever feel rushed, that's your cue to slow down, not speed up. Take the materials, take your time, talk to family, and get a second opinion — from me, or anyone you trust. The right decision rarely needs to be made in a single sitting.

! Pressure is a reason to pause

Feeling rushed or cornered is itself a red flag. A trustworthy installer is happy to wait while you think it over and compare. If they're not, that tells you something.

Local company or national one?

Both exist, and each has trade-offs worth weighing honestly.

A large national installer may offer scale and brand recognition, while a local company often brings closer service and a stake in its local reputation. What matters most isn't the size but whether they're licensed, insured, well-reviewed, and likely to be around and responsive when you need service years from now.

For service down the road — an inverter replacement, a question, a warranty claim — being able to reach a responsive installer matters a great deal. Weigh who will actually pick up the phone in year eight, not just who has the slickest sales visit.

✓ Ask who services it later

Whether local or national, ask plainly: 'If I have a problem in five years, who comes out, and how fast?' The answer matters as much as the install itself.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

What to prioritize in an installer shifts a bit between town and country — especially around service distance and well-pump backup.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, you'll likely have more installers to choose from, so you can be selective about references, reviews, and how well they handle your shade. Service is usually close by.

- More choice means you can compare several strong local installers.
- Prioritize how well they plan around your shade and roof.
- Nearby service makes future support easier.
- Still insist on licensing, insurance, and references.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, there may be fewer installers and longer service distances, and if you want backup for the well, you need one experienced with hybrid inverters and batteries — so choosing well matters even more.

- Fewer options make references and reputation especially important.
- Choose one experienced with battery backup if you want the well covered.
- Ask honestly about service response times out where you are.
- A stable, established installer is worth extra weight when help is farther.

★ Rural and want backup?

If you're out in the country and want your well backed up, you need an installer who knows hybrid inverters and batteries well. I'm glad to help you find and vet one. Call (330) 200-8042.

Who handles the permits and paperwork?

A good installer takes the bureaucratic burden off your shoulders.

A proper solar install needs building permits and your utility's approval to connect, called interconnection. A capable installer handles all of that — the permit applications, the inspection, and the utility paperwork — as part of the job. You shouldn't be left to navigate it alone.

Ask whether permits, inspection, and interconnection are included and handled by them. If an installer is vague about this or expects you to sort it out, that's a concern — it's core to a professional install. Our interconnection guide explains the process so you know what should be happening.

✓ It should all be handled for you

Permits, inspection, and utility approval are the installer's job on a proper install. If they're fuzzy about who handles them, ask again — and weigh the answer.

Questions to ask every installer

Bring this short list to each conversation and compare the answers.

Q: Are you licensed and insured for this work, and can I see proof?

A straightforward yes, with documents, is what you want. Hesitation or vagueness here is a serious red flag.

Q: What inverter do you recommend for my roof, and why?

You want reasoning tied to your shade and roof, not a one-size answer. It also shows whether they actually studied your home.

Q: Will this system give me power in an outage?

The honest answer for plain grid-tied is no; only a battery provides backup. Watch how plainly they handle this telling question.

Q: What's your workmanship warranty, and who services the system later?

You want a clear length and a clear answer on who to call for service years from now. Longevity and responsiveness matter.

★ Rehearse with me first

Call me before your installer meetings and we'll go over exactly what to ask and what good answers sound like. Walking in prepared changes everything. Call (330) 200-8042.

Reading the person across the table

Beyond the checklist, trust what a conversation tells you.

Notice how they treat your questions. Do they explain things plainly and patiently, or talk down to you and rush past your concerns? Do they study your actual roof and shade, or reach for a template? Do they give honest answers — including about the outage rule — or gloss over anything inconvenient?

A good installer treats you the way I try to: as a smart person who deserves plain answers and no pressure. That respect is a strong signal, and its absence is a warning. You'll be dealing with these folks for years, so how they treat you now matters.

✓ Respect is a signal

An installer who welcomes your questions and answers them plainly is showing you how they'll treat you for years. Trust that read.

A few installer myths

Let's clear up some common misunderstandings.

- **'The equipment is all that matters.'** The install and the installer matter just as much, sometimes more.
- **'Cheapest is best.'** The lowest quote can cost more later if it skimps on quality or support.
- **'Big national names are always safest.'** Size isn't the point — licensing, reviews, and service response are.
- **'I have to decide fast to get the deal.'** Pressure to rush is a red flag, not a real opportunity.

The honest summary: choose a licensed, insured, well-reviewed installer who studies your roof, answers plainly, and will be around to service the system. That's worth more than any single flashy number.

Putting it all together

Here's the whole installer story in one calm summary.

The installer matters as much as the equipment: they design, size, wire, permit, and stand behind your system for years. Check licensing, insurance, local track record, and references; get a few quotes and compare what's included; ask about the workmanship warranty and future service; and watch for pressure and too-good-to-be-true promises.

Most of all, never let anyone rush you, and trust how they treat your questions. Choose a patient, plain-spoken, well-credentialed local pro, and you've set your solar up to succeed for decades — which is exactly the goal.

★ Let's find you a good one

Choosing an installer is one of my favorite things to help with, because getting it right protects everything else. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about choosing an installer, answered plainly.

Q: Does the installer really matter that much?

Yes — as much as the equipment. They design and size the system, wire it safely, handle permits and utility approval, and service it for years. A great install lasts decades; a poor one causes headaches.

Q: How many quotes should I get?

Two or three is sensible. It lets you compare not just price but approach — what each recommends for your roof and what's included — and reveals who actually studied your home.

Q: What are the biggest red flags?

High-pressure sales, 'today only' deals, prices too good to be true, vagueness about outage behavior or licensing, and door-to-door pressure. Any of these is a reason to slow down.

Q: Should I choose a local or national installer?

Either can be fine — what matters is licensing, insurance, reviews, and who will actually service your system responsively years from now. Ask plainly who comes out later.

★ Still weighing installers?

No question is too basic. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll size up your options together.

A simple recap to keep

Tuck this short version in your solar folder.

- ❑ The installer matters as much as the equipment.
- ❑ Check licensing, insurance, local track record, and references.
- ❑ Get two or three quotes and compare what's included.
- ❑ Ask about the workmanship warranty and future service.
- ❑ Never let anyone rush or pressure you — that's a red flag.

✓ You've got the gist

That's everything you need to vet an installer with confidence and choose one you can trust for decades.

Where to go next

A few sibling guides pair naturally with this one.

Our warranties guide covers the workmanship and equipment warranties to ask about. The interconnection guide explains the permit-and-utility process a good installer handles. And our whole-home-solar guide on reading a quote helps you compare offers fairly. Follow whichever fits your moment.

And whenever you'd like a patient, no-commission second opinion on an installer or a quote, that's exactly what I'm here for. You deserve to feel confident before you sign.

★ A free second opinion

Bring me your installers and quotes and I'll give you my honest read — no stake in which you choose. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

Trust your instincts, too

Beyond all the checks, your own read on a person counts for a lot.

If an installer makes you feel rushed, talked down to, or uneasy, that's worth heeding even if their paperwork looks fine. And if one treats you with patience and respect, explains things plainly, and gives you room to decide, that's a strong sign you've found a good partner.

You're allowed to say 'I'd like to think about it' to anyone, at any time. The right installer will respect that completely. Your comfort and confidence matter, because this is your home and your money.

✓ Comfort is part of the decision

How an installer makes you feel — respected and unrushed, or pressured and small — is real information. Trust it alongside the checklist.

One last, reassuring word

Choosing an installer can feel high-stakes — and a few sensible steps make it very manageable.

You now know to weigh the installer as much as the equipment, to check licensing and references, to get a few quotes, to ask about warranties and future service, and to walk away from pressure. That's a strong, practical footing for the biggest decision in your solar project.

Keep this guide handy while you're interviewing, and lean on me for a second opinion any time. Finding the right partner is worth the care — and you now know exactly how to do it.

★ Always glad to help

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 whenever you want help vetting an installer or a quote. Patient, honest, no-commission help, every time.

How I fit in — and how I don't

Let me be clear about my part, since it shapes how I can help you here.

I'm a tech helper, not a solar installer or a licensed electrician. I don't sell solar, I earn no commission, and I don't do the rooftop or licensed electrical work myself. What I do is stand on your side of the table: helping you understand the options, prepare your questions, read the quotes, and judge the installers — so you're never talked into anything.

Then I help you line up a trustworthy local pro for the actual work. Think of me as your knowledgeable friend in the process, the one with nothing to sell and only your interests at heart. That's a role I take seriously and genuinely enjoy.

★ On your side, start to finish

From first questions to reading the final quote, I'm on your side of the table with nothing to sell. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and let's get you a great installer.

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 choosing a solar installer you can trust 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.

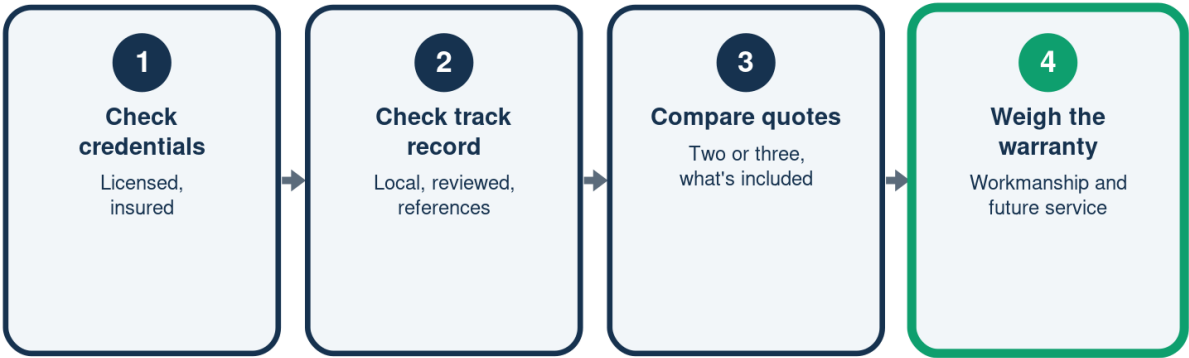
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I don't sell solar and I don't do the licensed electrical work or the rooftop install myself — I help you understand it all, ask the right questions, and line up a trustworthy local solar installer, so you never feel talked into anything.

★ 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

Vetting an Installer in Four Steps

A little diligence goes a long way



A patient, plain-spoken installer who welcomes questions is the goal.

Green Lights vs. Red Flags

How a good and a bad installer behave

	Green light	Red flag
Pace	Gives you time	'Today only' pressure
Answers	Plain and honest	Vague or dodging
Your roof	Studies it	Uses a template
Outage rule	Explains it	Glosses over it
Credentials	Shows proof	Hesitates

Pressure is a reason to pause -- a good installer is happy to wait.

Compare What's Actually Included

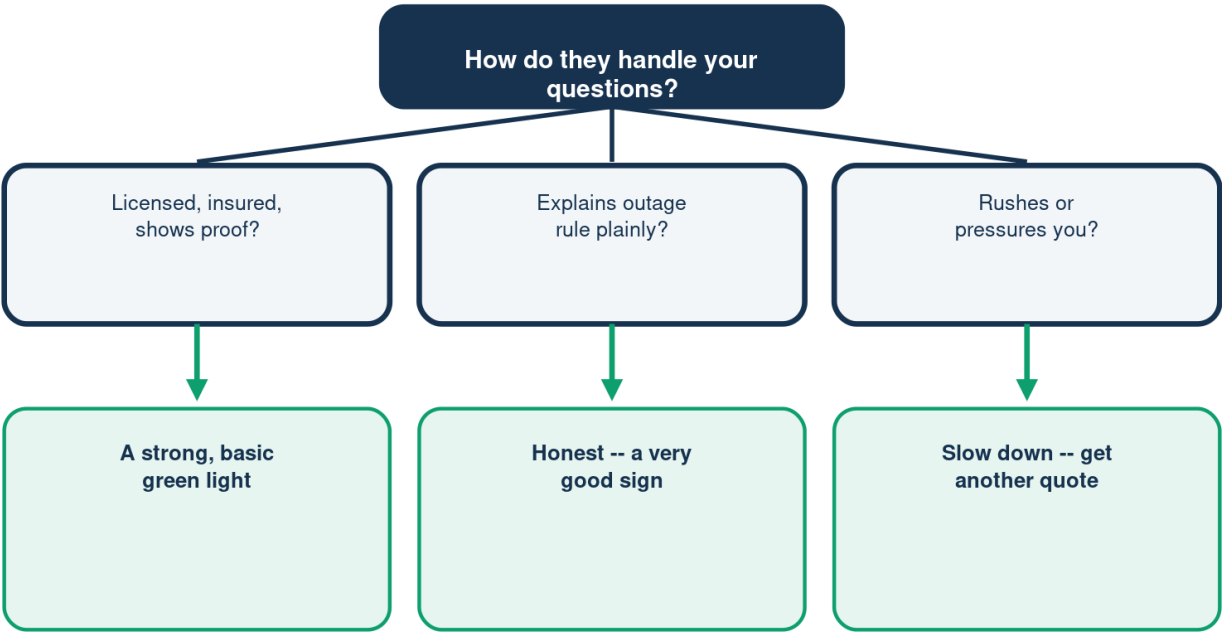
Not just the bottom-line price

	Look for	Why it matters
Equipment	Inverter type	and warranty
Permits	Handled for	you
Interconnection	Utility approval	included
Monitoring	Set up, your	own login
Workmanship	Their promise	on the work

A higher quote that includes more can be the better value.

Is This the Right Installer?

Let their answers guide you



Trust how they treat you -- you'll deal with them for years.

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



Need a Real Person?

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

BILL'S PROMISE

If you are not 100% happy with a visit, I will
make it right -- or refund it. No awkwardness,
no fine print. That is how I would want to be treated.

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

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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