



An Extended Guide · No. 1583

When Your Solar Stops Producing

Safe first checks — and when
to call, in plain English

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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. Troubleshooting here means safe looking and knowing when to call — never opening the inverter or getting on the roof.

When the power stops flowing

One day you glance at the app and your solar is making little or nothing, or the system shows offline. Before you worry, know this: most of the time it's something simple and harmless. This guide walks you through the safe checks anyone can do — and, just as important, what to leave to a pro.

I'm Bill, of Bill's Home Tech in Portage County. My aim is to help you tell the difference between a five-second non-problem — like the internet being down — and something worth a call to your installer, all without you ever touching anything dangerous.

There's a firm line running through this whole guide: you may look, and check a few safe things, but you never open the inverter, poke wiring, or climb the roof. Understanding beats tinkering, every time.

★ Not sure what you're seeing? Call me

If your system looks off and you're unsure, that's exactly what I'm here for. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll figure out together whether it's nothing or worth a service call.

Troubleshooting, on one page

The essentials, if you remember nothing else.

- ❑ First ask: is the neighborhood power out? Grid-tied solar shuts off in an outage on purpose.
- ❑ Next: is your home internet down? That can make the app say 'offline' while the panels still work.
- ❑ Consider the obvious: night, heavy clouds, or snow on the panels all mean low or no production.
- ❑ Look at the inverter's light or screen and note any message — but don't open anything.
- ❑ You may check whether a solar breaker has tripped, but never force or repeatedly reset one.
- ❑ For anything else — or anything uncertain — call your installer. Never open the inverter or climb the roof.

✓ The one-sentence takeaway

Most 'my solar stopped' moments are a grid outage, an internet hiccup, or the weather — check those safely first, then call your installer for the rest.

First check: is the power out?

This is the most common 'problem' of all — and it isn't a problem at all.

If the neighborhood power is out, your grid-tied solar will shut itself off, even in bright sun. That's the anti-islanding safety feature doing exactly its job, so it can't send power onto lines a crew may be repairing. Your panels and inverter are perfectly fine; they're just waiting for the grid to return.

So before anything else, ask: are the lights out in the house? Is the utility reporting an outage? If so, there's nothing to fix — the system will start back up on its own a little while after the power returns. Our guide on why solar goes dark explains this fully.

✓ A short wait after power returns is normal

Many inverters pause a few minutes after the grid comes back, to be sure it's stable, before they resume. So don't panic if your solar is slow to wake right after an outage — that patience is by design.

Second check: is it just the monitoring?

A quiet app doesn't always mean quiet panels. Here's the crucial distinction.

The monitoring app needs your home internet to report. If your internet or Wi-Fi router is down, the app may show 'offline' or stop updating — even though your panels are happily making power the whole time. This fools a lot of folks into thinking the solar failed when nothing's wrong at all.

So if the app says offline, check whether your home internet is working — try a web page on your phone over Wi-Fi. If the internet is down, that's your answer; the app usually catches up once it's back. If the internet is fine but the system still shows offline for more than a day or two, that's worth mentioning to your installer.

✓ Offline app, working panels

An 'offline' notice is most often an internet or router hiccup, not a solar fault. Check the internet first — it's the simplest fix of all, and often the whole story.

Third check: the obvious, honest reasons

Sometimes low production is simply the sky and the season — worth ruling out before you worry.

- **It's night or nearly so:** no sun, no production. Obvious, but worth saying.
- **Heavy clouds or a storm:** production drops sharply on dark days, and that's normal.
- **Snow on the panels:** covered panels can't make power until it slides or melts off.
- **Deep winter:** short days and a low sun mean less power than summer.
- **A shaded time of day:** a panel or two may dip when a shadow reaches them.

Compare against a similar day — sunny to sunny, not today's storm to last week's brilliant afternoon. If the weather explains it, there's nothing to fix. Our monitoring guide helps you know what's normal for your system.

Fourth check: read the inverter (don't open it)

Your inverter usually tells you how it's feeling — if you know where to look, from the outside only.

Most inverters have a status light or a small screen. A steady green light generally means all is well; a red or flashing light, or an error message on the screen, means it wants attention. Take a photo or write down exactly what it shows — that's gold for your installer, and our error-messages guide helps you understand common ones.

That's as far as you go. You read the outside, note the message, and stop. You never open the case, remove a cover, or touch the wiring. An inverter can hold a dangerous charge even with the sun down, so looking is safe and opening is not.

! Look, note, never open

Reading a status light or screen from the outside is perfectly safe. Opening the inverter is not — it's high-voltage work for a licensed pro. Note what you see and let them handle the inside.

Fifth check: has a breaker tripped?

This one comes with a caution, so read it carefully.

Solar systems have breakers or a disconnect switch, often near the inverter or your main panel. Occasionally one trips, which would stop production. It's fine to look and see whether a solar breaker is in the 'off' or middle position rather than 'on.' Knowing that is useful information for your installer.

Here's the caution: if a breaker has tripped, it tripped for a reason. You might safely switch it back on once if you're comfortable and it's clearly a solar breaker — but if it trips again, stop and call your installer. Never force it, never flip it repeatedly, and never touch anything if there's any sign of scorching, heat, or a smell.

! A breaker that keeps tripping is a warning

A breaker trips to protect you. If a solar breaker won't stay on, that's a real signal something needs a professional — not a reason to keep flipping it. Stop and call your installer.

When to stop and call right away

A few things mean 'hands off, call now' — please take these seriously.

- Any burning smell, scorch marks, melted plastic, or smoke near the inverter or wiring.
- A breaker that trips again the moment you reset it.
- Water dripping onto or pooling around the inverter.
- Sparks, buzzing that sounds electrical, or anything hot to be near.
- Anything at all that feels unsafe or that you're unsure about.

In any of these cases, keep your distance, don't investigate hands-on, and call your installer — and if there's any sign of fire, call 911 first. No amount of saved time is worth a risk with electricity. When in doubt, step back and pick up the phone.

! Fire or smoke — call 911 first

If you ever see smoke, flame, or scorching, get everyone to safety and call 911 before anything else. Your solar can be sorted out later; your safety comes first, always.

Making the call count

When you do call your installer, a little preparation makes it go smoothly.

Have a few things ready: what the app shows (offline, low, or zero production, and since when), exactly what the inverter's light or screen says (a photo is perfect), whether the neighborhood power and your internet are working, and whether any breaker looked tripped. That handful of details often lets them diagnose faster, sometimes over the phone.

If your system is under warranty, remind them of that — a covered inverter fault may cost you little. And if you're not sure who installed it or where the paperwork is, that's something I can help you sort out. Keeping it filed makes moments like this easy.

★ I'll help you make the call

If you'd like a hand gathering the right details or even being on the line, I'm glad to help you talk to your installer clearly. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

How urgent a production stoppage feels depends on your setup and, in the country, on whether you're relying on the system for backup.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, a stopped inverter is usually a comfort-and-savings matter, not an emergency — city water flows regardless, and service is typically close by. You can work calmly through the safe checks.

- Rarely urgent — take your time with the safe checks.
- Service is usually nearby if a call is needed.
- An 'offline' app is very often just the home internet.
- Compare to a similar sunny day before assuming a fault.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, if your inverter is part of a battery backup for the well, a real fault matters more — and rural internet drops can make the app cry wolf, so telling a true problem from a hiccup is a valuable skill.

- If backup for the well is involved, a genuine fault is more pressing.
- Spotty rural internet often causes false 'offline' alarms.
- Know your installer's response time when service is farther away.
- Keep stored drinking water so a solar hiccup is never a water crisis.

★ Rely on backup? Let's have a plan

If your solar and battery keep your well running, it's worth knowing exactly what to check and who to call if it stops. I'll help you build that plan. Call (330) 200-8042.

When it's just one panel

If you have panel-level monitoring, you might see a single panel lagging — here's how to read that.

With microinverters or optimizers, the app shows each panel. If one panel dips at the same time each day, that's very likely a shadow reaching it, not a fault — see our shading guide. If one panel is flat or far behind the others all day, every day, that's the kind of thing to note and mention to your installer.

The nice part is that with panel-level systems, one struggling panel doesn't take down the rest, and you can tell the technician exactly which one. That precision often makes the fix quicker. You still don't go up to look — the app tells you what's needed.

✓ Daily dip versus all-day flat

A panel that dips at the same hour is probably shade. A panel that's flat all day, every day, is worth a mention. The app's pattern is your clue — no roof climbing required.

What never to do

Let's be very clear about the hands-off list, because it keeps you safe.

- **Don't open the inverter** or remove any cover — it can hold a dangerous charge.
- **Don't get on the roof** to inspect or clean panels or microinverters.
- **Don't touch or pull on wiring, connectors, or the disconnect** beyond simply looking.
- **Don't repeatedly reset a breaker** that keeps tripping.
- **Don't let an unlicensed handyman** poke around inside the system.

None of this is because you're not capable — it's because solar carries serious voltage and any hands-on repair is genuinely a licensed pro's job. Your power is in knowing what to check safely and when to call. That's real, useful help, and it keeps you safe.

Heading off surprises

A few gentle habits mean a stoppage rarely catches you off guard.

Glance at your monitoring weekly so you know your system's normal rhythm — then a real drop stands out early. Turn on the app's alerts so it tells you if the system goes offline. And keep your warranty, install date, and installer's number filed together, so a call is easy when you need it.

With those habits, most 'my solar stopped' moments become a quick, calm check rather than a scramble. You'll often know within a minute whether it's the grid, the internet, the weather, or something worth a call. Our monitoring guide helps you build the weekly habit.

★ Let's set up your safety net

On a visit I can turn on sensible alerts, show you your system's normal, and file your key papers — so a stoppage is never a mystery. Call (330) 200-8042.

Questions to ask your installer

When you call about a stoppage, these help you get to the bottom of it.

Q: Based on what I'm seeing, is this a real fault or something simple?

Share the app status, the inverter's message, and whether the grid and internet are up. A good installer can often tell quickly, sometimes over the phone.

Q: Is this covered under my warranty?

If the inverter or install is at fault and still under warranty, a covered repair may cost you little. Have your paperwork handy.

Q: How soon can you come, and what should I do meanwhile?

Especially if you rely on backup, ask about timing and whether there's anything safe you should or shouldn't do while you wait.

★ I'll help you ask

If talking to a technician feels daunting, I'm glad to help you gather details and even be on the call. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

A few troubleshooting myths

Let's clear up some common misunderstandings.

- **'The app is offline, so my solar is broken.'** Usually it's just the internet — the panels keep working.
- **'No production means an expensive failure.'** Often it's a grid outage, the weather, or snow — all harmless.
- **'I should open the inverter to check it.'** Never — it's high-voltage. Read the outside and call a pro.
- **'I can just keep resetting the breaker.'** A breaker that keeps tripping is warning you — stop and call.

The honest summary: most stoppages are simple and safe to diagnose from the outside. Know the safe checks, respect the hands-off list, and call your installer for the rest.

Putting it all together

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

When your solar stops, work the safe checks in order: is the grid out? is the internet down (making the app cry offline)? is it the weather or snow? Then read the inverter's light or screen from the outside and note any message, and see whether a solar breaker looks tripped — without forcing or repeatedly resetting it.

For anything beyond those safe checks — and immediately for any burning smell, scorching, water, or a breaker that keeps tripping — call your installer, and 911 for any sign of fire. You never open the inverter or climb the roof. Knowing what to check and when to call is the whole skill.

★ Stuck? I'm one call away

If your system's behavior has you puzzled, call or text me at (330) 200-8042. We'll figure out together whether it's nothing or worth a service call.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most when solar stops producing, answered plainly.

Q: My solar is making no power — what should I check first?

Is the neighborhood power out? Grid-tied solar shuts off in an outage on purpose. Then check the weather and whether snow covers the panels. Those explain most sudden drops.

Q: The app says offline but it's sunny — is my system broken?

Usually not. The app needs internet to report, so 'offline' most often means your home internet or router is down while the panels keep working. Check the internet first.

Q: Can I fix a solar problem myself?

You can safely check the grid, the internet, the weather, the inverter's outside light, and whether a breaker looks tripped. Anything hands-on — opening the inverter, roof work, wiring — is a licensed pro's job.

Q: The inverter has a red light — what do I do?

Note or photograph exactly what it shows and call your installer. Don't open the inverter. Our error-messages guide helps you understand common warnings, but the fix is the pro's.

★ Still stuck?

No question is too basic. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll sort out what your system is telling you.

A simple recap to keep

Tuck this short version in your solar folder.

- ❑ Check the grid first — solar shuts off in an outage on purpose.
- ❑ Check the internet — an 'offline' app often just means the net is down.
- ❑ Rule out weather, night, and snow on the panels.
- ❑ Read the inverter's outside light and note any message — never open it.
- ❑ Call your installer for anything else; call 911 for any smoke or fire.

✓ You've got the gist

Know the safe checks, respect the hands-off list, and you'll handle any stoppage calmly and safely.

Where to go next

A few sibling guides pair naturally with this one.

Our error-messages guide decodes the common inverter warnings. The monitoring guide helps you know your system's normal so a real drop stands out. And the why-solar-goes-dark guide explains the outage shut-off that causes the most common 'stoppage' of all. Follow whichever fits your moment.

And whenever you'd rather have a patient person look with you, that's what I'm here for. Solar problems are far less stressful with a friend on the line.

★ Let's look together

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll walk through what your system is doing, safely and calmly.

Stay calm, stay safe

Let's end on the mindset that serves you best when solar acts up.

The vast majority of 'my solar stopped' moments turn out to be a grid outage, an internet hiccup, or the weather — nothing to fix at all. So the best first response is calm: run the safe checks, and more often than not you'll find a harmless explanation in a minute or two.

For the rare real fault, the right move is equally calm: note what you see, keep your hands off the hardware, and call your installer. You don't have to fix it yourself — you just have to spot it and make the call. That's a safe, capable place to be.

✓ Calm checks, then the phone

Safe looking first, hands-off always, and a phone call for the rest. That's the whole art of solar troubleshooting for a homeowner.

One last, reassuring word

Troubleshooting sounds technical, but your part is simple and safe.

You now know the safe checks — grid, internet, weather, the inverter's light, a tripped breaker — and the firm hands-off list that keeps you safe. That's everything a homeowner needs to handle a stoppage wisely and know when to call for help.

Keep this guide with your solar papers so it's handy on the day you need it, and lean on me any time your system puzzles you. There's never a silly question when it comes to staying safe.

★ Always glad to help

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 whenever your solar isn't behaving. Patient, plain, safety-first help, every time.

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 what to do when your solar stops producing 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.

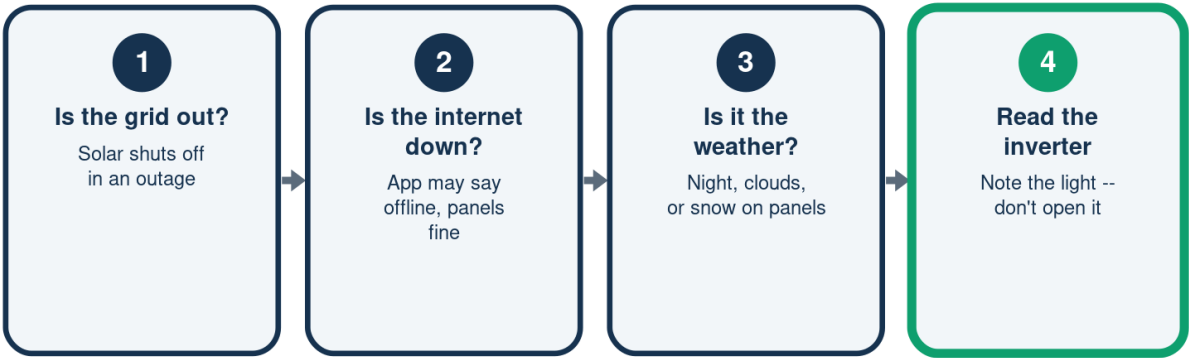
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day,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

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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

Safe First Checks

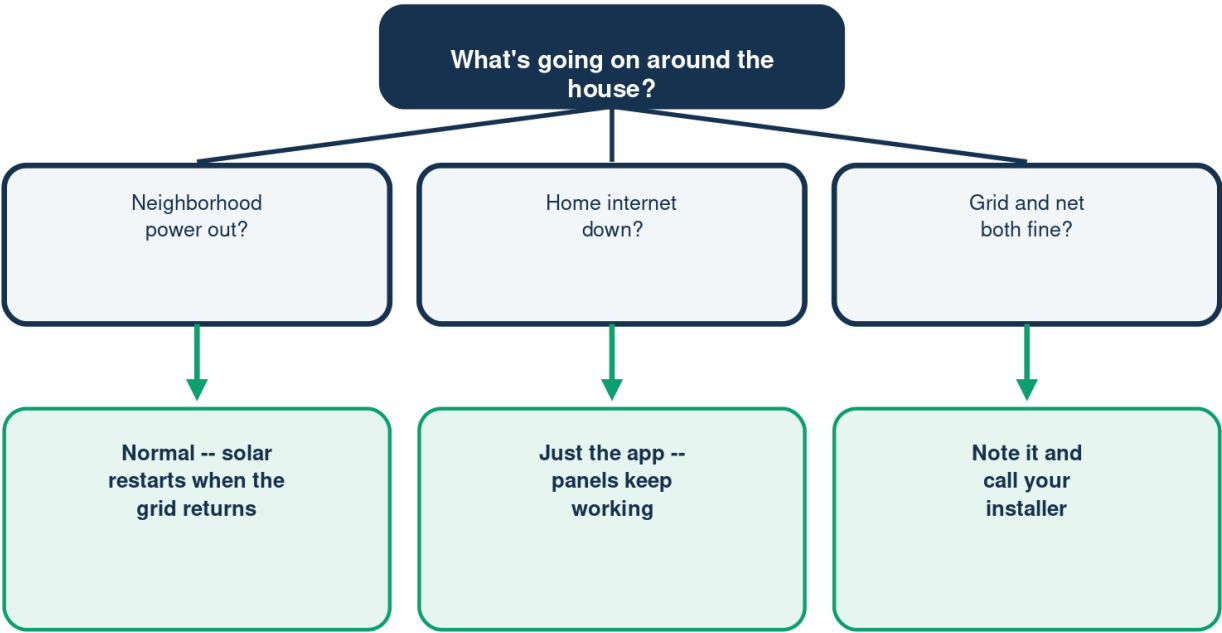
Work these in order



Most stoppages are explained by one of these -- all harmless.

App Says Offline or Zero -- Now What?

Tell a hiccup from a real fault



A quiet app doesn't mean quiet panels -- check the internet first.

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

Safe to Check vs. Hands Off

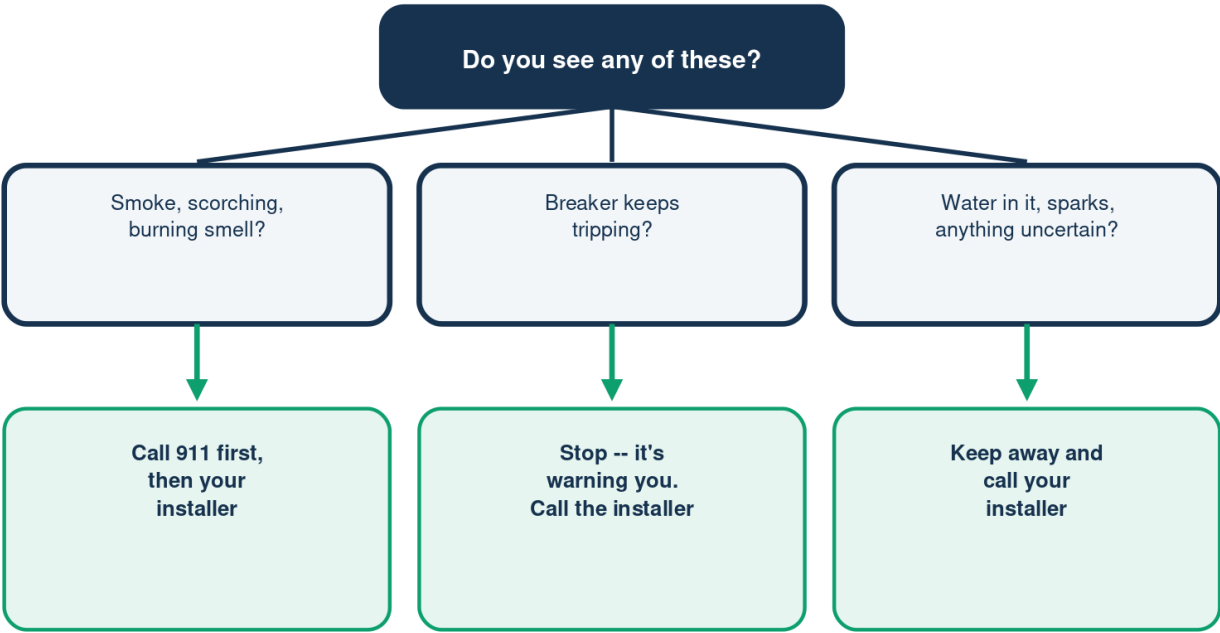
Know the firm line

	You may	Never
The grid / internet	Check	--
Inverter light	Read it	Open the case
A tripped breaker	Look; reset once	Force or re-reset
The roof	--	Climb it
Wiring	--	Touch or pull it

Looking is safe; opening, climbing, and wiring are the pro's job.

When to Stop and Call Right Away

Some signs mean hands off, now



No saved time is worth an electrical risk -- when in doubt, step back and call.

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



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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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