



An Extended Guide · No. 1299

The Gas Line Hookup

Fueling your standby,
done by a licensed pro

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

BillsHomeTech.com · (330) 200-8042 · Atwater, Ohio

Free & printable — share it with someone who needs it



Book a visit —
billshometech.com/book

! Read this first — carbon monoxide is still the real danger

A standby generator runs on an engine, and engine exhaust contains carbon monoxide — an invisible, odorless gas that can kill. Your installer sets the unit outdoors and spaces it away from windows, doors, and vents to meet the maker's instructions and local code, which is a big part of what keeps you safe. Your job is to keep it that way: never let anyone box it in, build a structure around it, or let snow, leaves, or drifts pile up against it, and never move it closer to the house. Put battery-backup carbon-monoxide alarms on every floor and outside the bedrooms, and test them — the safety agencies urge this for every home. If an alarm sounds, or anyone feels dizzy, sick, or sleepy, get everyone into fresh air first and ask questions later. This guide is all about the fuel connection, so it's worth remembering that a fuel leak is something you can smell, while the exhaust's carbon monoxide is not — which is why both the leak test and the alarms indoors matter.

Getting fuel to your standby, the safe way

A standby generator is only as good as the fuel feeding it — and connecting that fuel, whether it's natural gas from the street or propane from a tank in your yard, is careful, licensed work. This guide explains what that hookup involves and, just as important, who does it.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent 30+ years helping folks understand the equipment in their homes in plain, unhurried language. Think of this guide as me at your kitchen table, walking you through the fuel side so you know what to expect and what good work looks like.

I'll say the most important thing right up front: I don't do gas work, and neither should you. A licensed gas pro makes the connection, and this guide is about understanding their job well enough to ask good questions — not about doing any of it yourself. Which fuel to pick in the first place is a separate decision our natural-gas-versus-propane guide covers.

★ There's nothing to sell you here

I don't sell generators, fuel, or gas work, and I earn no commission, so this is just honest advice. If you'd like help understanding a quote for the fuel side, call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you already understand the fuel hookup and why it's a job for a licensed pro.

- ❑ The fuel connection is licensed work — a gas pro does it, with a permit and a leak test. It is never a do-it-yourself project.
- ❑ On natural gas, the big question is capacity: your gas pro confirms the meter and line can actually feed the unit.
- ❑ A bigger unit or a long run from the meter may call for a larger line or a meter upgrade — better learned up front than after.
- ❑ On propane, the supplier and gas pro size and place the tank, set the regulator and the line, and arrange refill access.
- ❑ Every connection gets a manual shutoff and a leak test before the unit is ever run on it.
- ❑ If you ever smell gas, leave first and call the gas company or 911 — no exceptions, no wait-and-see.

✓ The one-sentence version

Picking the fuel is your decision; connecting it safely is your licensed gas pro's job — and this guide helps you tell good work from rushed work.

What 'the fuel hookup' actually means

Whichever fuel you choose, the hookup is the chain that carries it from its source to the generator, safely and under control.

On natural gas, that chain starts at your gas meter and runs a line to the unit. On propane, it starts at a tank on your property, through a regulator that steps the pressure down to what the generator needs, and on to the unit. Either way, the chain includes a dedicated shutoff valve so the fuel can be turned off right at the generator.

The last link in the chain is always the same: a leak test. Before your unit ever runs on its new fuel supply, the gas pro checks every joint and fitting to be sure nothing is escaping. That test is not a formality — it's the heart of a safe hookup.

✓ Two fuels, one careful discipline

Natural gas and propane connect differently, but the care is identical: the right parts, sized correctly, joined tightly, and proven leak-free before use. The rest of this guide walks each one in plain English.

Why this is a licensed gas pro's job

Of everything in this guide, this is the part I most want you to take to heart: gas is not a place to save money by doing it yourself.

Running or altering a gas line calls for a licensed gas pro for good reason. They know the right materials and sizing, how to join and support the line, where the shutoff belongs, and how to prove the work leak-free. In almost every town the job also needs a permit, so an inspector confirms it was done to code — a genuine safeguard, not red tape.

Doing gas work yourself, or letting an unlicensed handyman do it, isn't just unsafe — it can fail inspection, void your generator's warranty, and create a hazard you can't see. There is simply no version of this that's worth the risk.

! Never do gas work yourself

This is the one hard line in this whole series. Leave every part of the fuel connection — the line, the tank, the regulator, the shutoff, and the leak test — to a licensed gas pro. Your safety depends on it.

Natural gas: can your line actually feed it?

Here's the question that surprises people — a gas line that happily runs your furnace may not be big enough to also run a generator.

A standby generator can be a hungry appliance, and it has to draw its fuel alongside everything else in the house. So before anything is installed, a licensed gas pro confirms that your gas meter and the line to the unit can supply what it needs — without starving your furnace, water heater, or range. This is a calculation and an inspection, never an eyeball guess.

A larger unit, or a long run from the meter out to where the generator sits, is more likely to need an upgrade — a bigger meter or a heavier line. That's a normal part of some installs. Far better to learn it in the quote than to discover it after the fact.

✓ This is the pro's call, not yours

You don't have to figure out whether your line is big enough — that's exactly what the gas pro is for. And whether natural gas is even your best fuel is the subject of our natural-gas-versus-propane guide.

Natural gas: what the connection involves

Once the supply is confirmed, the natural-gas hookup itself is straightforward — for the pro, that is.

The gas pro runs or extends a line from your meter to the generator, sizing it for the unit and supporting it properly along the way. At the generator they fit a dedicated manual shutoff, so the fuel can be turned off right there when the unit is serviced. The utility is looped in when the meter itself needs attention.

Then comes the leak test on every new joint, and the permit inspection that confirms the whole run meets code. Only after that does your unit get commissioned and run on its fuel for the first time.

✓ Know where your shutoff is

Ask your gas pro to show you the manual shutoff at the generator and how it works.

You'll likely never need it, but knowing where it is — and leaving it clear and reachable — is a small, sensible habit.

Propane: sizing and placing the tank

If you're on propane, the hookup starts with the tank — and getting its size and spot right is the whole game.

Your propane supplier and gas pro size the tank to your generator and to how long your outages tend to run, then place it where it can be delivered to, serviced, and kept the proper distance from the house, the unit, and the property line. I won't throw a number at you — the sizing is theirs to calculate, not mine to guess.

Placement also has to leave room for the delivery truck to reach the fill point. A tank that's beautifully sited but awkward to refill is a headache every storm season, so refill access is part of the plan from the start. The finer points of where the unit itself sits live in our placement guide.

✓ Size for the outage you'd hate to face

When your supplier sizes the tank, ask them to plan around a long, inconvenient outage rather than an average one. A little extra tank is cheap peace of mind, and our fuel guide covers the trade-offs.

Propane: the regulator, the line, and refills

From the tank to the generator, propane passes through a couple of simple, important parts your pro sets up.

A regulator steps the tank's pressure down to what the generator needs — an ordinary, essential part of any propane setup. From there a line runs to the unit, with a dedicated shutoff at the generator, just like natural gas. And just like natural gas, every bit of it is leak-tested before the unit runs.

Your one ongoing job with propane is keeping an eye on the tank gauge and arranging refills before it runs low — many folks set up automatic delivery so they never have to think about it. Deep cold can slow how quickly a tank gives up its fuel, which your pro handles through tank sizing and placement; our cold-weather guide covers that in full.

✓ Keep the supplier's number handy

Whether you're on automatic delivery or call-in refills, keep your propane supplier's number somewhere you'll find it. A quick top-up before a big storm is one of the easiest bits of readiness there is.

The leak test and the shutoff you should know

Two things make every fuel hookup safe to live with, and both are worth understanding even though the pro handles them.

The leak test is the pro's proof that the connection is sound — every joint checked, with the unit not run until it passes. If a pro ever seems ready to skip it or rush it, that's your cue to slow the job down. A proper hookup is always leak-tested before first use.

The shutoff is your simple point of control. There's a manual valve at the generator that turns the fuel off right there, and on propane the tank has its own valve too. You won't touch these day to day, but knowing where they are — and keeping them clear — is part of owning the system.

! Clear, reachable, and known

Keep the shutoff valves clear of clutter, snow, and overgrowth, and make sure another adult in the house knows where they are too. In the rare moment they matter, you don't want to be hunting for them.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

The fuel hookup looks quite different for a house on a city gas main than for a farmhouse running on a propane tank — and where you live usually decides which one you're dealing with.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, a gas main often runs down the street, so the hookup is usually a natural-gas connection — and because city water keeps flowing without power, the fuel side is about keeping food, heat, and comfort going, not a pump.

- Your gas pro's main task is confirming the existing meter and line can feed the unit before any work begins.
- A meter or line upgrade is a normal item on some in-town installs — ask for it as its own line on the quote.
- Smaller lots mean the line run to the unit is often short, but placement near the meter still gets planned carefully.
- If your street has no gas main, propane is a perfectly good in-town option too — our fuel guide weighs the choice.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country there's often no gas main, so propane is usually the answer — and the stakes are higher, because when the power quits your well pump quits with it, and no electricity means no water.

- Size the propane tank for a long outage that keeps the well pump running — our well-pump guide covers what that pump demands.
- Plan the tank's spot around the delivery truck's access, not just the generator's, so refills are never a struggle.
- A standing refill arrangement keeps the tank topped up through storm season, when a rural outage is most likely to drag on.
- Keep some drinking water stored and your propane supplier's number handy as simple, sensible backups.

★ Not sure what your fuel side will involve?

Tell me whether you've got a gas main at the house or you're out on a well, and I'll help you picture the hookup and read the quote before you commit. Call (330) 200-8042.

The permit and the inspection

The fuel connection almost always needs a permit, and that's a good thing — it's how you know the work was done right.

Gas work typically calls for a mechanical or gas permit, separate from the electrical permit the transfer-switch wiring needs. An inspector then confirms the connection meets your local code before the system is signed off. The unit's spacing from the meter and the house follows the maker's instructions and engine-placement rules such as NFPA 37, which your installer handles.

Skipping the permit to save a little time or money is a false economy. It risks failed inspection down the road, trouble with insurance or the warranty, and — most of all — unproven work on a gas line. Our permits guide covers the whole permit-and-inspection picture.

✓ Ask who pulls the permit

When you compare quotes, confirm which pro pulls the gas permit and handles the inspection. A reputable installer expects that question and answers it plainly.

Who does what, and in what order

The fuel connection is one part of a coordinated job, so it helps to see where the gas pro fits among the other hands.

A standby install brings together a few trades: the installer sets the unit on its pad, a licensed electrician wires the transfer switch and panel, and the licensed gas pro makes the fuel connection. The utility or propane supplier is coordinated as needed, and inspections tie it together. Our installation guide walks the full sequence.

The fuel work generally comes together with the rest so the whole system can be commissioned and tested at once. You don't manage this yourself — a good installer coordinates the trades — but knowing the cast makes the quotes and the schedule far less mysterious.

★ Lining up trustworthy pros is where I help

I can't do the gas or electrical work, but I'm glad to help you find licensed pros I trust and make sure the pieces are coordinated. That's part of what a visit is for. Call (330) 200-8042.

What's yours to do, and what isn't

Owning a fueled standby comes with a short, simple list for you — and a firm list of things to leave entirely alone.

- **Yours:** keep the area around the unit, the shutoff valve, and any propane tank clear of clutter, snow, and overgrowth.
- **Yours:** on propane, glance at the tank gauge now and then and keep refills arranged before storm season.
- **Yours:** know where the fuel shutoff is and what a gas smell means — and make sure another adult knows too.
- **The pro's:** the line, the tank, the regulator, the shutoff, and the leak test — every bit of the actual gas work.
- **The pro's:** any change, repair, or extension to the fuel connection, now or years from now.

✓ When in doubt, it's the pro's

If a task involves touching, tightening, or altering anything that carries gas, it isn't yours — it's a call to your gas pro. There's no shame in that; it's exactly the right instinct.

If you ever smell gas

Both natural gas and propane are given a strong 'rotten egg' odor on purpose, so a leak is easy to notice. Knowing what to do matters more than anything else in this guide.

A faint whiff right at the unit after a storm may be worth a look, but a strong or spreading gas smell is an emergency, every single time. Don't try to find the source, and don't try to fix anything — that's not your job and never will be.

Remember, too, that a gas smell and carbon monoxide are two different dangers. A fuel leak you can smell; the carbon monoxide in engine exhaust you cannot, which is why the leak test protects against one and your indoor alarms protect against the other.

! Leave first, call from somewhere safe

If you smell gas, get everyone out, don't flip switches or light anything, and call your gas company or 911 from a safe distance. A gas smell is always treated as an emergency — never a wait-and-see.

A few myths, cleared up

Some common beliefs about the fuel side just aren't so. Let's clear the air.

- **'My furnace line is already there, so it's ready.'** Not necessarily — a generator can need more than your heating appliances, so the gas pro must confirm the supply first.
- **'I can save real money doing the gas hookup myself.'** Gas work is licensed for a reason. Doing it yourself isn't safe or legal and can void the warranty.
- **'Propane in the tank goes bad, so it's a hassle.'** Propane stores for years without breaking down — the only habit it asks is keeping the tank topped up.
- **'A leak test is just paperwork.'** It's the opposite — the leak test is the single most important step proving your connection is safe to use.

✓ When in doubt, ask a plain question

There's no silly question about gas. If a pro's answer leaves you more confused, ask again — or ask me. Clear beats clever every time, especially with fuel.

The honest cost feel of the fuel side

I won't quote dollar figures — they vary too much to be honest — but I can tell you what drives the cost of the fuel connection.

On natural gas, the big variable is whether your line and meter can feed the unit as-is or need an upgrade, plus the length of the run. On propane, it's the tank — bought or leased — along with the regulator, the line, and setting it all in place. Every one of these should show up as its own line on a good quote.

Because the fuel side can swing the total, getting itemized quotes and understanding what each includes is the best way to spend wisely. Our cost-and-value guide shows you how to read the whole picture fairly.

✓ Ask for the fuel side, itemized

Ask each installer to spell out the fuel connection — any line or meter upgrade, any tank cost — as separate line items. That's how you compare complete installs instead of just machine prices.

Signs something's off with the fuel side

The fuel connection is built to be trouble-free, but it helps to know the handful of signs worth a call to your pro.

Most of these are uncommon, and none are things you fix yourself. The point is simply to notice them and pick up the phone rather than waiting or tinkering.

- Any gas smell, faint or strong — treat a strong one as an emergency and leave first.
- A hissing sound near the unit, the shutoff, or a propane regulator.
- The generator faulting or shutting down soon after starting, which can point to a fuel-supply issue.
- A propane gauge dropping faster than it should, or the unit struggling in a hard freeze — see our cold-weather guide.

! Don't diagnose gas yourself

If any of these show up, keep clear of the connection and call your gas pro — or the gas company and 911 if you smell gas strongly. Fuel troubles are for licensed hands, always.

Questions worth asking your gas pro

Whether you're talking to an installer, a gas pro, or to me, these get you to a fuel connection you actually understand and trust.

Q: Can my existing gas line and meter really feed this unit?

The heart of the natural-gas question. A licensed gas pro confirms it and tells you up front if a meter or line upgrade is needed — not after the work has started.

Q: What size propane tank do you recommend, and where will it go?

So you understand how long it'll carry you, how refills reach it, and how it's placed relative to the house and unit. Ask them to size it for a long outage.

Q: Will you pull the gas permit and handle the inspection?

Confirm who's responsible for the permit and the leak-test inspection, so nothing falls through the cracks between trades.

Q: Where's my fuel shutoff, and can you show me how it works?

Always ask for a quick, hands-on look at the shutoff at the generator and, on propane, the tank valve — so you know your simple points of control.

✓ There's no silly question

If a pro makes you feel rushed or foolish for asking about gas, that's a reason to keep looking, not to sign. A good one welcomes plain questions.

What I do, and what I leave to the pros

Worth saying plainly, because it's the honest shape of how I can help with the fuel side.

- **What I help with:** understanding your quote for the fuel connection, making sense of a line or tank recommendation, lining up licensed gas pros I trust, and teaching you your shutoffs once it's in.
- **What only a licensed gas pro does:** confirming your supply, running or connecting the line, sizing and setting a propane tank and regulator, fitting the shutoff, and leak-testing the work.
- **What I never do:** gas work of any kind — that's not my license, and your safety deserves the real thing.

★ Call before you're deep in it

The best time to reach me is while you're still gathering quotes, not after something's installed and puzzling. A little guidance up front saves a lot of second-guessing. Reach me at (330) 200-8042.

Getting the fuel side right

If you're heading toward an install, here's the fuel-connection path from start to finish, so nothing catches you off guard.

- ❑ Decide your fuel first — natural gas or propane — using our natural-gas-versus-propane guide.
- ❑ Have a licensed gas pro confirm your natural-gas supply, or have the tank sized and sited for propane.
- ❑ Get the fuel side itemized in your quotes, including any line, meter, or tank costs.
- ❑ Confirm who pulls the gas permit and schedules the leak-test inspection.
- ❑ Let the pros make the connection, fit the shutoff, and leak-test it before first use.
- ❑ Learn where your shutoffs are and keep them, the tank, and the area clear from then on.

✓ You don't walk it alone

Each of these steps has a guide in this series, and I'm glad to walk any of them with you. You don't have to become a gas expert — you just have to take it one calm step at a time.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about hooking up a standby's fuel, answered plainly.

Q: Can my existing gas line just run the generator?

Not always. A generator can draw more than your furnace or water heater, so a licensed gas pro confirms the meter and line can feed it first — a bigger unit or a long run may need an upgrade.

Q: Can I connect the gas myself to save money?

No. The fuel connection is licensed work with a permit and a leak test. Doing it yourself isn't safe or legal, and it can void the warranty. This is a job for a licensed gas pro.

Q: What does the propane side involve?

A tank sized and placed by your propane supplier and gas pro, a regulator that steps the pressure down, the line to the unit, a shutoff, refill access — and a leak test before first use.

Q: Do I need a permit for the gas work?

Almost always a mechanical or gas permit and an inspection that confirms the connection meets local code. Our permits guide covers the whole picture.

Q: What do I do if I ever smell gas?

Leave right away, don't flip switches or light anything, and call your gas company or 911 from somewhere safe. Always treat a gas smell as an emergency.

★ Still have questions? That's what I'm here for

Understanding the fuel side before you sign is exactly the kind of thing I love to help with, with nothing to sell you. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and let's talk it through.

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 connecting your standby generator's fuel feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

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

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

The Natural-Gas and Propane Hookups

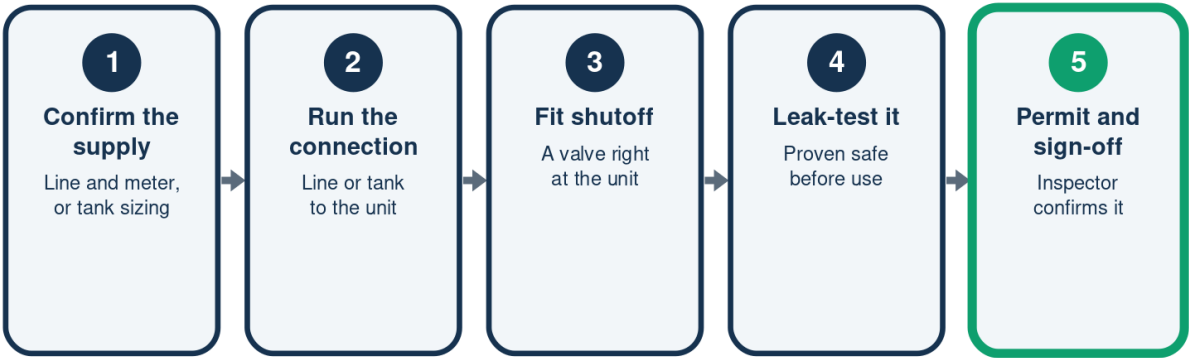
The same discipline, two different supplies

	Natural gas	Propane
Comes from	A utility line	An on-site tank
Key check	Line big enough?	Tank sized right
Steps down via	Utility supply	A regulator
Refilling	Nothing to do	Plan refills
Always ends with	A leak test	A leak test

Which fuel to pick is a separate choice — see our fuel guide.

How the Fuel Connection Happens

A coordinated job, done by licensed hands



You never do any of this yourself — it's licensed gas work.

The Gas Pro's Job vs. Yours

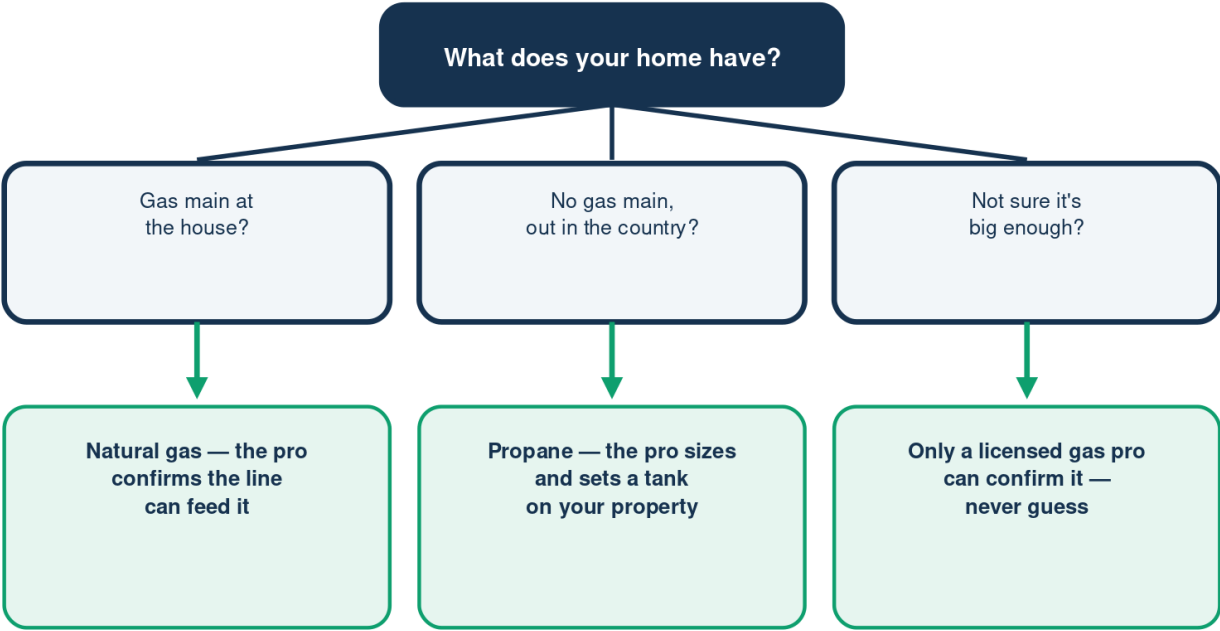
A firm line worth knowing by heart

	Your gas pro	You
The gas line	Runs and tests	Never alter it
The shutoff	Installs it	Know its spot
The tank or meter	Sizes and sets	Keep it clear
If you smell gas	Repairs later	Leave and call

Anything that carries gas is the pro's — always.

Which Fuel Feed Is Yours?

Let what your home already has point the way



Every fuel connection is leak-tested and permitted — never DIY gas work.

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*



Book a visit —
billshometech.com/book

Use of these guides is subject to our Terms of Use (billshometech.com/terms-of-use).

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

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

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech