



An Extended Guide · No. 1296

The Standby Installation Process

What to expect, start to finish

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

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! 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. The good news for install day is that your installer handles every inch of this placement and clearance work — following the maker's instructions and local code — so your unit is sited safely from the very first day.

Let's walk through the whole install, calmly

Putting in a standby generator is a coordinated professional job, done in a sensible order by the right licensed people. This guide walks you through the whole sequence — start to finish — so nothing about install day feels like a mystery.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent 30+ years helping folks feel at home with the equipment in their houses, patiently and in plain language. I'm not a licensed electrician or gas pro myself — what I do is help you plan, line up pros I trust, and learn your system once it's in.

We'll keep the details in their own guides where they belong: the pad and placement, the permits, and the gas hookup each have a guide of their own. Here, we stay up at the level of the whole job — who does what, in what order, and what you can expect to see.

★ Thinking about taking the plunge?

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and tell me a little about your home. I'll help you picture what your install would involve and line up licensed pros I'd trust in my own home — with nothing to sell you.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you already understand what putting in a standby generator involves.

- ❑ It's a coordinated job done in order — plan, permit, pad, set the unit, wire it, fuel it, inspect, start up, and show you.
- ❑ A licensed electrician wires the automatic transfer switch and your panel; a licensed gas pro runs and connects the fuel.
- ❑ It almost always needs a permit, and an inspection confirms the work is safe and up to code before it's done.
- ❑ The installer coordinates the trades, the permit, and any heads-up your utility needs — you shouldn't be left to juggle that.
- ❑ It ends with a startup, a real test, and someone walking you through your own system.
- ❑ It is not a do-it-yourself project, and it isn't something I do myself — the electrical and gas work are licensed trades.

✓ The one-sentence version

A standby install is a team of licensed pros doing a careful, step-by-step job — and the last, best step is them handing you a system you understand.

The team who makes it happen

A standby install isn't one person with a wrench. It's a small cast, each with a job — and you're part of it.

- **The installer or lead:** plans the job, sizes the unit, coordinates the trades, pulls the permit, and stands behind the finished work.
- **The licensed electrician:** wires the automatic transfer switch and ties it into your electrical panel.
- **The licensed gas pro:** runs and connects the fuel, whether natural gas or propane, and leak-tests it.
- **The inspector:** a neutral expert who confirms the finished work meets code before it's signed off.
- **You:** you make the decisions, provide access, and learn the system at the end.
- **Me, if you'd like:** I help you plan, vet quotes, and I love being there for the testing and the orientation.

✓ One point of contact keeps it simple

With a full-service installer, you mostly deal with one person who coordinates the rest. That's a big part of what you're paying for — you shouldn't have to run the job yourself.

It starts with a good look

Before anyone lifts a tool, a good install begins with a visit to size up your home and your needs.

The installer walks your property and looks at the practical picture: where the unit could sensibly sit, where your electrical panel and gas meter are, and how the pieces would connect. This is also when placement and the pad get worked out — our placement-and-pad guide covers that side in full.

The other half of that first look is the load calculation — figuring out how much of your home you want to power and sizing the unit to match. That's a proper calculation by the installer, built around your must-run list, not a guess from a chart. Our sizing guide walks through it in plain English.

✓ Come with your must-run list

The single most helpful thing you can do before that visit is jot down what you'd want running in a two-day outage. That little list drives the sizing and shapes the whole install.

The permit comes first

Before the real work begins, the job gets permitted. It sounds like red tape, but it's a genuine safeguard.

A standby install almost always needs an electrical permit, and often a gas or mechanical one too. A reputable installer pulls these as part of the job and schedules the inspection — you shouldn't be left to do it yourself.

I won't wade far into the paperwork here, because it has its own guide. Our permits guide explains what each permit covers, what the inspection checks, and why skipping this step is the one corner you never want to cut.

✓ Confirm who pulls it

When you compare installers, ask each one plainly: do you pull the permits and meet the inspector? A clear yes is what you're listening for — our permits guide explains why.

The pad and the spot

Your generator needs a firm home to sit on and a safe place to sit. Both get settled before the unit arrives.

The unit rests on a level, stable base — a poured concrete pad or a manufactured composite pad — set on firm, well-drained ground above flood level. Which kind of pad suits your site is the installer's call.

Where that pad goes is governed by the required clearances from windows, doors, vents, the gas meter, and anything combustible, plus good drainage and sensible run lengths. The installer chooses the exact spot — our placement-and-pad guide goes deep on what drives it.

✓ This isn't a spot you eyeball

Balancing clearances, drainage, snow, and run lengths is a real professional judgment. Your preferences matter, but the final spot has to clear every safety and code requirement first.

Setting the unit in place

With the pad ready, the generator itself is delivered and set — the moment it becomes a real fixture of your home.

The unit is moved into position and settled onto its base, then leveled and secured so it sits and runs the way it's designed to. It's heavier than it looks, which is one more reason this is a job for a crew with the right equipment, not a couple of neighbors and a hand truck.

Once it's set, it's ready to be connected — first to your electrical system, then to your fuel. Those are the two licensed jobs at the heart of the whole install, and they come next.

✓ Level and secure matters

A unit that sits dead-level on a solid base starts cleanly and lasts. Taking the time to set it right is exactly the kind of care you want from your crew.

The electrician wires the transfer switch

This is the first of the two licensed connections, and it's the brain of the whole system going in.

A licensed electrician installs the automatic transfer switch and ties it into your electrical panel. That switch is what watches your power, starts the generator on an outage, and safely hands your home from the grid to the generator and back. Our transfer-switch guide explains exactly how it works.

A key part of this work is making sure the generator's power and the utility's power can never meet — the electrical code (NEC 702.5) requires exactly that. It's what protects your home's wiring and any utility crew working on the lines outside.

! Why this has to be licensed work

Wiring a transfer switch into your panel is 240-volt work on your home's service. Done wrong, it can defeat the very protection that keeps your generator from backfeeding the outside lines — which is why it's a licensed electrician's job, start to finish.

The gas pro connects the fuel

The second licensed connection brings the unit its fuel — and it's every bit as much a specialist's job.

A licensed gas pro runs and connects the fuel line, whether that's tapping your natural-gas supply or connecting a propane tank, and leak-tests the work. They also confirm your supply can actually feed the unit; a larger unit or a long run can call for an upgrade. Our gas-line guide covers all of this in detail.

Whether the unit is set up for natural gas or propane is decided during the install — many units can run on either. If you're still weighing the two, our natural-gas-versus-propane guide compares them fairly, with no invented numbers.

✓ Two connections, two licenses

Notice that the electrical and the gas are separate licensed trades. A full-service installer coordinates both so you don't have to chase two different pros yourself.

A heads-up to your utility

Depending on where you live and your setup, your electric utility may want to know a standby generator is going in.

Because a standby ties into your home's service through a transfer switch, some utilities ask to be notified so their records stay current and their crews know what's on the line. This is usually routine, and your installer typically handles the coordination as part of the job.

The important thing is simply that it doesn't fall through the cracks. When you ask who pulls the permit, ask about utility notification in the same breath — a full-service installer will have both covered.

✓ One more thing on your checklist

You don't have to understand the utility's paperwork — you just want to confirm someone is handling it. Our permits guide touches on this coordination too.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

An install for a tidy in-town lot and one for a farmhouse on a well share the very same sequence, but the day plays out a little differently for each.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, the crew is often working a smaller yard with close neighbors, and natural gas is frequently already at the house — which can make the fuel side of the job more straightforward.

- With natural gas already there, the gas pro's work is often connecting to a line that's close at hand.
- Tighter lots mean placement, setbacks, and the neighbor's view get extra care on the day.
- Clearing access for delivery and equipment ahead of time helps on a smaller property.
- The permit and any neighborhood-association sign-off are sorted before the crew arrives.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country the install often has more ground to cover, literally. Longer runs for the gas and electrical lines, and a propane tank to place, can add steps — and keeping your well pump powered is usually the whole reason you're doing this.

- If you're on propane, placing and connecting the tank is part of the job the gas pro handles.
- Longer gas and electrical runs from the unit to the meter and panel can add time and materials.
- The load calculation makes sure the unit is sized to start your 240-volt well pump, so water keeps flowing.
- More room usually makes placement easier, even as the runs get longer.

★ Not sure how your day will look?

Tell me whether you're on city gas or propane, town water or a well, and I'll help you picture your particular install before you talk to anyone. Call (330) 200-8042.

Inspection day

Once the work is done, a neutral expert takes a look before the job is called finished. This is a feature, not a formality.

The inspector confirms the safety-critical work meets code — the transfer switch's isolation, the electrical connections, the fuel hookup, and the placement clearances. It's the same code that keeps your home from backfeeding the lines and keeps exhaust away from your windows.

Your installer schedules this and meets the inspector; you mostly just provide access. When it passes, you have documented proof that the riskiest work in your home was done right. Our permits guide covers what the inspection looks at in more depth.

✓ A pass is peace of mind

The small hassle of scheduling an inspection buys you a lasting reassurance — and paperwork you'll be glad to have at insurance, warranty, or resale time.

Startup and commissioning — the first real run

With the connections made and the inspection passed, the unit is brought to life and put through its paces.

The installer starts the unit for the first time, checks its settings, and sets the schedule for its automatic weekly self-test. This commissioning step is where the system goes from installed to genuinely ready.

Then comes the part I love: a real test. The installer simulates an outage so you can watch the unit sense it, start, take over your home, and — when utility power returns — hand it back and shut down. Seeing it work is what turns a big machine into something you trust.

★ This is where I like to be

Whenever I can, I join for the testing so I learn your specific setup alongside you. Then I can walk you through it again anytime you'd like a refresher. Ask me to be there — reach me at (330) 200-8042.

Your orientation — learning your system

The last step of a good install isn't a machine — it's you, comfortable with what you now own.

- ❑ How to tell at a glance that the unit is healthy and ready.
- ❑ When its automatic weekly self-test runs, so the sound doesn't surprise you.
- ❑ What normal looks and sounds like during an actual outage.
- ❑ How to set up monitoring on your phone, if your unit offers it.
- ❑ What routine maintenance it needs and how a service plan works.
- ❑ Who to call for what — your installer, your gas pro, or me.

✓ You don't have to memorize any of it

A good orientation ends with the key things written down and left with you. Our monitoring and maintenance guides cover the day-to-day rhythm, and I'm always a call away for a refresher.

What you do, and what the pros do

It helps to see the whole job split into your part and their part. Your part is real, but it's the decisions — not the wrenches.

Stage	Who does it
Deciding and planning	You, with Bill's help
The load calculation	The installer
Permits and inspection	The installer
The pad and placement	The installer's crew
Electrical and transfer switch	Licensed electrician
Fuel line and connection	Licensed gas pro
Learning the system	You, at the orientation

✓ **Your job is the easy part**

Making good decisions and understanding your system — that's your share, and these guides are here to make it simple. The licensed work belongs entirely to the pros.

How long does an install take?

It's the first thing folks ask, and the honest answer is: it depends — so be a little wary of anyone who promises an exact number before seeing your home.

Some installs wrap up in about a day; others run to a few days. What stretches it out is usually the fuel work, a longer gas or electrical run, a panel that needs updating, the permit and inspection schedule, and plain old weather.

None of that is a problem — it's just the honest range. A good installer will give you a realistic window after they've looked at your home, and keep you posted if anything shifts along the way.

✓ A little patience pays off

Rushing an install to save a day is a false economy. You want the pad set right, the connections made carefully, and the inspection passed — that's what makes it dependable for years.

Getting your home ready for install day

There's very little for you to do, but a few small kindnesses to the crew make the day go smoothly.

- ❑ Clear a path for delivery and equipment to reach the work area.
- ❑ Keep pets indoors and children clear of the work zone for the day.
- ❑ Leave room for the crew to park and to move materials.
- ❑ Have your decisions settled — placement preferences, whole-house versus essentials, and your must-run list.
- ❑ Plan for a brief power-off window when the electrician ties in the transfer switch.

✓ Ask about the power-off window

There's usually a short stretch when your power needs to be off for the electrician to work safely. Ask your installer when and for roughly how long, so you can plan around anything that matters.

Why this is licensed work, not a weekend project

I'll be plain with you, because it matters: a standby install is not a do-it-yourself job, and it's not something I do myself either.

It ties into the two systems that demand a license — your electrical panel and your gas supply — and it needs a permit and an inspection. Each of those exists because the work, done wrong, is genuinely dangerous.

! Doing it yourself costs more than it saves

Beyond the real safety risk, a do-it-yourself or unpermitted install can void the manufacturer's warranty and cause trouble with insurance. The money you'd save up front is dwarfed by what it can cost later.

That's why my role stops well short of the wrench. I help you plan and decide, and I line up the licensed pros — but the electrical, the gas, and the install itself are theirs to do.

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 an install.

- **What I help with:** deciding whether a standby fits your home, building your must-run list, making sense of quotes, lining up licensed installers I trust, and being there for testing and your orientation.
- **What only licensed pros do:** the electrical work and transfer switch, the gas-line connection, and pulling the permit.
- **What I never do:** panel wiring, gas work, or the install itself — 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 comparing installers and 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.

Questions to ask your installer

These questions get you to an install you understand and an installer you can trust, not just a machine on a pad.

Q: Who pulls the permit, and who schedules the inspection?

You want a clear answer that it's them, not you. A reputable installer handles the permit and inspection as part of the job — our permits guide explains why that matters so much.

Q: Will you handle the gas work and the utility notification too?

A full-service installer coordinates the licensed gas pro and any heads-up your utility needs. Make sure nothing important is quietly left for you to arrange.

Q: What will you do to protect my yard and home during the work?

A good crew treats your property with care — protecting the lawn, cleaning up, and leaving the site tidy. It's fair to ask how they work before you hire them.

Q: Will you walk me through the system before you leave?

Always ask for a hands-on orientation, not just a handshake. A test run with the installer there is worth far more than the manual alone — and I'm glad to be there too.

✓ There's no silly question

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

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from folks about to have a standby generator put in, answered plainly.

Q: Do I need to be home for the whole install?

Not for every minute, but plan to be there at the start, so you can point out preferences, and at the end for the testing and your orientation. That last part is where you learn your own system.

Q: Will my power be off during the install?

There's usually a brief window when the electrician needs your power off to tie in the transfer switch safely. Your installer will tell you when and for roughly how long, so you can plan around it.

Q: Can you do the install yourself, Bill?

No — the electrical and gas work are licensed trades, and I'm a tech helper, not a licensed electrician or gas pro. What I do is help you plan, line up pros I trust, and teach you the system once it's in.

Q: How long will it take?

Often a day, sometimes a few, depending on the fuel work, any panel updates, permits, and the weather. A good installer gives you a realistic window once they've seen your home — I'd be wary of an exact promise made sight unseen.

Q: What happens right after it's installed?

It's inspected, started up, and tested, and then someone walks you through using it. From then on it mostly waits, running a brief self-test on a schedule — our maintenance guide covers that rhythm.

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

Understanding your install before it happens 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 installing a standby 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.

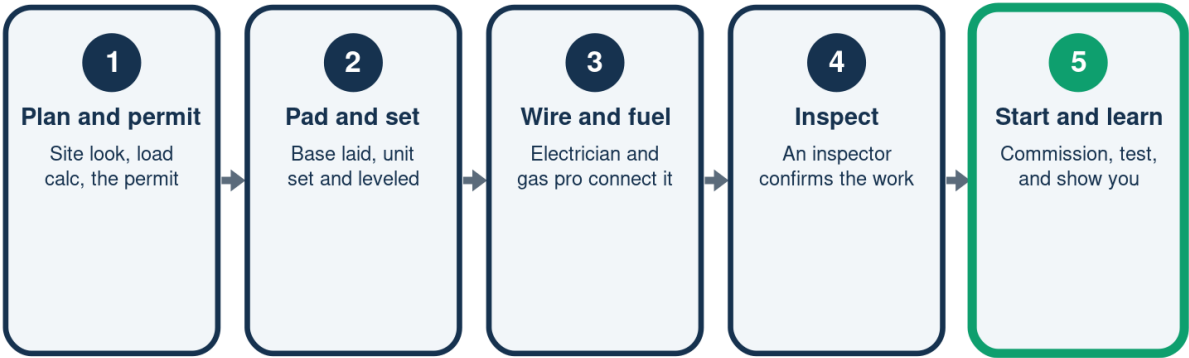
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day,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

How a Standby Install Unfolds

A coordinated job, done in order



You make the decisions; the licensed pros do the licensed work.

Who Handles What

A team job — and you're on the team

	You	The pros
Deciding	Your call	We advise
Load calc	Your must-runs	Installer sizes
Electrical	Leave it be	Licensed pro
Fuel line	Leave it be	Licensed gas pro
Learning it	You and Bill	They show you

Your share is the decisions and the learning, not the wrenches.

The Two Licensed Trades

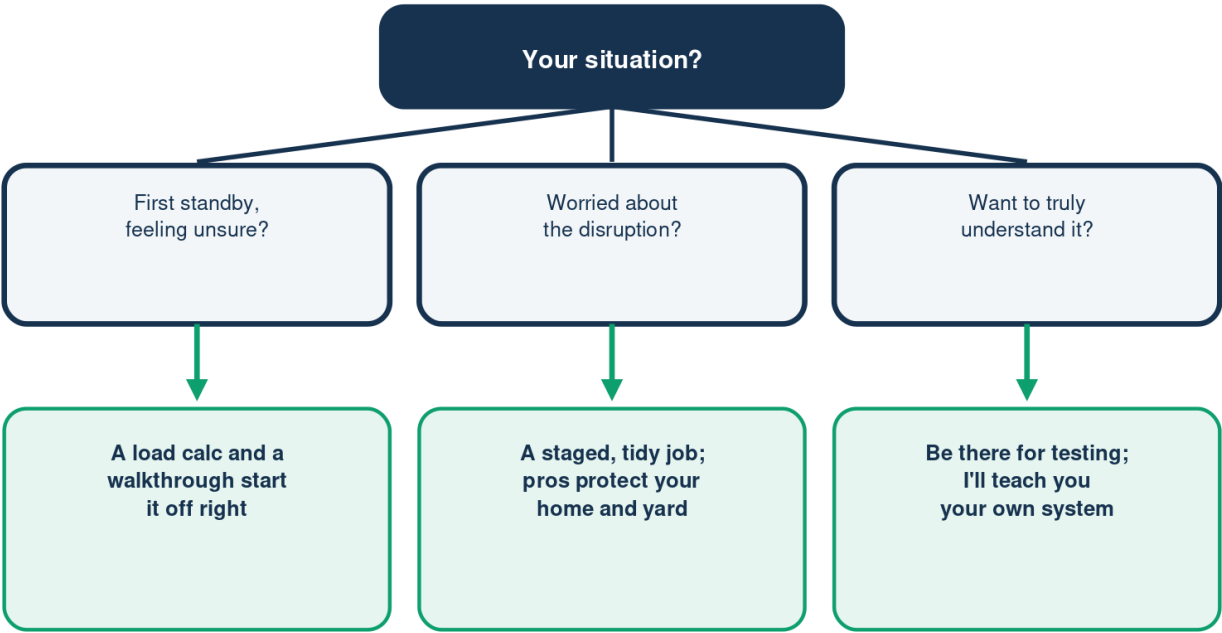
The heart of every standby install

	Electrician	Gas pro
Handles	Panel and switch	The fuel line
Makes sure	No backfeed	No leaks
Confirms	Wiring to code	Supply is enough
Licensed?	Yes, required	Yes, required

A full-service installer coordinates both so you don't have to.

Wondering How Yours Will Go?

Let your situation set expectations



The electrical and gas work are licensed, permitted jobs — never do-it-yourself.

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.

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— 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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