



An Extended Guide · No. 1301

# Monitoring Your Standby Generator

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Apps, alerts, and peace of mind

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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. An app can tell you the generator started, but it cannot smell trouble for you, so the battery-backup carbon-monoxide alarms inside your home remain the real safety net, not the phone in your pocket.

## Your generator can text you

One of the quiet joys of a modern standby is that it can keep you posted — a little message on your phone when it runs, when the power goes out, or if it ever needs attention. This guide is about that peace of mind, and how simple it is to set up.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent 30+ years helping folks get comfortable with the technology in their homes, patiently and without jargon. If the word 'app' makes you want to close this guide, stay with me — I promise to keep it plain, and you don't have to be a phone person to enjoy this.

We'll cover what monitoring tells you, how the unit connects, and how your family can keep an eye on things too. The weekly self-test itself and the real hands-on care live in our maintenance guide; here, we're just talking about staying informed.

**★ I'll set it up with you**

Getting the app on your phone and choosing the right alerts is exactly the kind of thing I love to help with. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 — I can do it on a visit, or often right on your screen for \$49.

## The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you already understand what monitoring does and why folks love it.

- ❑ Most modern standby units can report to an app on your phone over your home Wi-Fi or a cellular signal.
- ❑ It shows status at a glance — ready, running, or needs attention — and the result of the weekly self-test.
- ❑ It can alert you the moment it starts, loses utility power, or has a fault, whether you're home or away.
- ❑ Many systems can notify family or your installer too — wonderful for travelers and adult kids watching a parent's home.
- ❑ Setup is simple: connect the unit, install the app, and choose your alerts. I'm glad to help.
- ❑ It's a comfort, not a safety device — keep your carbon-monoxide alarms tested no matter what the app says.

### ✓ The one-sentence version

Monitoring lets your generator tell you and your family how it's doing, from anywhere — so a glance at your phone replaces a lot of wondering.

## What monitoring actually is

Strip away the tech talk and it's a simple idea: your generator and your phone can stay in touch.

A monitoring-capable standby has a small built-in connection that lets it send its status to an app on your phone or tablet. Instead of walking outside to see a light on the unit, you glance at your phone — and instead of wondering whether it kicked on while you were away, it simply tells you.

It's the same idea as a thermostat or doorbell that talks to your phone. You don't have to understand what's happening under the hood; you just get plain messages in an app, in everyday language.

### ✓ You don't have to be an app person

If you'd rather not fuss with a phone at all, that's fine — the generator still works exactly the same. Monitoring is an optional comfort, and one your family can watch on your behalf if you'd prefer.

## What it tells you, at a glance

Open the app and, in plain words, you can see how your generator is doing right now.

- **Status:** whether it's ready and waiting, running right now, or flagging something that needs attention.
- **The weekly self-test:** confirmation that its regular test ran and passed — a quiet 'all's well' each week.
- **Utility power:** whether your home is on the grid or the generator has taken over.
- **Faults:** a clear heads-up if something's wrong, so you can call for service instead of finding out during the next storm.

That's really the heart of it. No graphs to study, no numbers to learn — just a plain picture of a machine doing its job, or a nudge when it isn't.

### ✓ The self-test result is the reassuring part

Seeing that weekly 'test passed' note is a small comfort that adds up. Our maintenance guide explains what that self-test is doing under the hood.

## The alerts that matter most

Beyond checking on demand, the real magic is the alerts that come to you — your generator reaching out when something changes.

The most valuable ones are simple: it started (so you know the power went out, even if you're away), it lost utility power, it switched back to the grid, or it has a fault that needs a look. Some will also flag a low battery — handy, since the battery is the usual weak link.

You choose which alerts you want, so it's never noisy. Many folks keep just the important ones — outage, restored, and fault — so the phone only speaks up when it truly matters.

### ★ Your generator, reaching out

There's something genuinely reassuring about a text that says 'I started, everything's fine' while you're two states away. I'll help you pick the handful of alerts worth having and skip the rest. Call (330) 200-8042.

## Wi-Fi or cellular: two ways to connect

For the unit to talk to the app, it needs a way onto the internet. There are two common paths, and neither is complicated.

### Home Wi-Fi

The unit joins your home's Wi-Fi, just like a phone or a smart TV. There's usually no extra monthly cost, but it does need a usable Wi-Fi signal reaching the unit outside — which isn't a given, since the generator often sits well away from your router.

### Cellular

The unit uses a mobile signal of its own, the same kind your phone uses, so it works even if you have no home internet or weak Wi-Fi at the unit. This convenience sometimes comes with a subscription, which your installer can explain.

#### ✓ Signal at the unit is the deciding factor

The single biggest question is whether a good signal actually reaches where the generator sits. That's what usually decides Wi-Fi versus cellular — and it's easy to test before you commit.

## Getting a good signal out at the unit

Because a standby lives outside — often at the far corner of the house — Wi-Fi that's strong indoors can be weak where it counts.

Before relying on Wi-Fi, it's worth checking the signal right where the unit sits. If it's weak, the fix is usually easy: a Wi-Fi extender or a mesh point placed toward that side of the house can carry the signal out to the unit. If that's a hassle, cellular sidesteps the whole question.

This is a great example of a small thing that's annoying to discover later and simple to sort out up front. A quick signal check at the unit saves a lot of 'why isn't it connecting?' down the road.

### ★ I can test the signal for you

Checking the Wi-Fi signal at the unit and sorting out an extender if you need one is a quick, satisfying job I'm happy to handle on a visit. Call (330) 200-8042 and we'll make sure it connects reliably.

## Letting family and your installer get alerts too

One of the most loved features has nothing to do with you checking your own phone — it's letting the people who care about you stay in the loop.

Many systems let you add other people to receive alerts — an adult child, a trusted neighbor, or your installer. So if the generator starts or faults, your daughter three states away gets the same heads-up you do, and can check in or call for service if needed.

For families keeping an eye on a parent who lives alone, this is genuinely wonderful. It quietly answers the 'is everything okay at Mom's?' question without anyone having to call and ask. And if your installer gets fault alerts, service can be arranged before you're even worried.

### ✓ A gift for the whole family

If your kids worry about you during storms, adding them to the alerts is a kindness to them as much as to you. It's often the feature families are most grateful for once it's set up.

## Setting it up, step by simple step

Getting monitoring going is a short, one-time job — and one I'm glad to sit beside you for.

- ❑ Confirm whether the unit will use home Wi-Fi or cellular, and that a signal reaches it.
- ❑ Install the maker's app on your phone or tablet from the official app store.
- ❑ Create or sign in to your account — you type your own password; I'll never ask you to hand it over.
- ❑ Connect the unit to Wi-Fi or activate its cellular connection, following the app's prompts.
- ❑ Choose the alerts you want, and add any family members who should get them too.
- ❑ Send a test alert so you know exactly what one looks like when it arrives.

### ✓ Registering can help your warranty

Setting up the app is often a natural moment to register your unit, which can matter for the warranty. Our warranty-and-service guide covers why registration is worth doing.

## Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Monitoring is a comfort anywhere, but what it saves you from looks a little different in a close-in neighborhood than out on a rural well.

### If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, home Wi-Fi usually reaches the unit easily, and the big win is knowing what's happening while you're away — at work, travelling, or wintering somewhere warm. Because city water keeps flowing without power, the alerts are about protecting food, heat, and comfort.

- Strong home Wi-Fi at the house often makes the Wi-Fi path the simple, no-extra-cost choice.
- Travelers and snowbirds get real peace of mind — you'll know it ran and switched back without a neighbor having to check.
- Add a house-sitter or neighbor to the alerts while you're away for a long stretch.
- An outage alert is your cue to think about the fridge and freezer, even from afar.

### If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country the alerts carry more weight, because when the power quits the well pump quits too — and no electricity means no water. Home internet can also be spottier, which is exactly where cellular monitoring shines.

- A fault or lost-utility alert on a well home isn't just about comfort — it can mean water is at stake, so it's worth acting on quickly.
- Where home internet is weak or absent, cellular lets the unit report anyway, without leaning on your Wi-Fi.
- Adult children watching a rural parent's home get the same alerts and can arrange help across the distance.
- Pair the alerts with the readiness habits in our well-pump and storm-readiness guides.

#### ★ Not sure how yours should connect?

Tell me where your unit sits and how strong your Wi-Fi is out there, and I'll help you choose Wi-Fi or cellular and get the alerts set up for you and your family. Call (330) 200-8042.

## Peace of mind while you're away

For anyone who travels, winters south, or just leaves home for a weekend, monitoring turns worry into a glance.

An empty house during an outage used to mean coming home to a surprise — spoiled food, a cold house, a flooded basement. With monitoring, you learn about the outage when it happens, see that your generator handled it, and can arrange help if anything looks off. The not-knowing is the part it fixes.

Snowbirds especially tell me this is the feature that lets them relax. A northern home riding out winter storms on its own is far less nerve-wracking when it can tell you, from a thousand miles away, that all is well.

### ✓ Check the app instead of worrying

The real value isn't the technology — it's trading a nagging 'I wonder if everything's okay at home' for a quick, reassuring look at your phone.

## Peace of mind for the family too

Sometimes the person who sleeps better isn't the homeowner at all — it's an adult child a few hours away.

If you have grown kids who worry about you living alone, especially through winter storms, adding them to your generator's alerts is a simple kindness. They'll know your power went out and your generator caught it, without having to call and wake you to ask.

It works the other way too: if you're the adult child reading this for a parent's home, monitoring lets you keep a caring eye on things from a distance. You can be the one who calls for service when a fault appears, so your parent never has to sort it out alone.

### ★ Setting this up for a parent?

Helping families set up monitoring so everyone can watch over a loved one's home is some of my favorite work. I can do it on a visit or walk a family member through it on a screen-share for \$49. Call (330) 200-8042.

## What monitoring is not

Monitoring is a wonderful comfort, but it's honest and important to be clear about what it doesn't do.

It is not a substitute for real maintenance or the weekly self-test — it reports the news, it doesn't fix anything. And it is emphatically not a safety device: an app cannot smell a gas leak, and it cannot detect the carbon monoxide in engine exhaust. Those jobs belong to your gas pro's leak test and to the carbon-monoxide alarms inside your home.

So enjoy the alerts for what they are — a way to stay informed and get help sooner — while keeping your alarms tested and your maintenance on schedule, exactly as our maintenance guide describes.

### **! The app is not a detector**

Keep battery-backup carbon-monoxide alarms on every level and outside the bedrooms, and test them — the agency CPSC urges this for every home. A phone alert is a convenience; your alarms are the safety net.

## If you're not a 'phone person'

I hear this a lot, and I want to put you at ease: you can own and love a standby without ever opening an app.

The generator does its job the same whether or not anyone's watching a phone. If apps aren't your thing, you have easy options: let a family member be the one who gets the alerts, or keep just a single, simple alert and ignore the rest. Nothing about monitoring is required.

And if you'd like to try it but feel unsure, that's exactly what I'm for. I'll set it up, write down in plain words what each alert means, and make sure you — or your kids — feel comfortable before I leave.

### ★ I'll write it down in plain English

I'm happy to leave you a simple, large-print note of what each alert looks like and what to do about it, so there's never any guessing. No question is too basic. Call (330) 200-8042.

## Keeping it connected over time

Once it's set up, monitoring mostly looks after itself — but a couple of common hiccups are worth knowing about.

The most common one catches everybody: if you change your home internet, get a new router, or update your Wi-Fi password, the generator can quietly drop off the network and needs reconnecting. If your alerts ever go silent for a while, that's the first thing to check.

Beyond that, keep the app installed and updated, and stay signed in. None of this is hard, and most of it never needs touching — but knowing the router-change gotcha saves a lot of head-scratching.

### ✓ Changed your internet? Reconnect the unit

New router or Wi-Fi password is the number one reason a generator stops reporting. I can reconnect it for you — often right on your screen for \$49, without a visit.

## Your account, and staying safe from scams

Monitoring uses an app account, and wherever there are accounts and alerts, a little caution keeps you safe.

Use a strong, unique password for the app — a password manager makes that painless, and you never have to share it with anyone, including me. I help you set things up while you type your own password; a trustworthy helper never needs it.

Be wary, too, of surprise texts or emails claiming to be about your generator and urging you to click a link or 'verify' something. Real status shows up inside the app. When in doubt, don't tap the link — open the app directly, or call your installer or me.

### **! Real alerts live in the app**

A genuine generator alert appears in the maker's app, not as a random link by text. Treat any 'click here about your generator' message as suspicious until you've checked the app or asked someone you trust.

## A few myths, cleared up

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

- **'Monitoring means I never have to check the generator.'** No — it keeps you informed, but real maintenance and the weekly self-test still matter, as our maintenance guide explains.
- **'I need to be good with technology.'** Not at all. The alerts are plain messages, I can set it up for you, and family can watch it on your behalf.
- **'No home internet means no monitoring.'** Cellular monitoring works without home Wi-Fi at all, so a spotty-internet home can still stay informed.
- **'The app watches for carbon monoxide.'** It does not — it reports the generator's status, never your indoor air. Tested alarms are what keep you safe.

### ✓ When in doubt, ask a plain question

There's no silly question about any of this. If a feature or a message leaves you unsure, ask again — or ask me. Clear beats clever every time.

## Questions worth asking your installer

Whether you're talking to an installer or to me, these get you to monitoring you understand and will actually use.

### **Q: Does this unit offer monitoring, and is it built in or an add-on?**

Most modern units offer it; ask whether it's included, an accessory, or a module, so there are no surprises on the quote.

### **Q: Will it use my home Wi-Fi or cellular, and is there a signal at the unit?**

The key practical question. Ask them to check the signal where the generator will sit, and whether cellular carries any subscription.

### **Q: Can my family or you get alerts too?**

Confirm you can add other people — an adult child, a neighbor, or the installer — so the right folks are notified, not just you.

### **Q: Will you help me install the app and choose alerts before you leave?**

Ask for a hands-on setup, not just a mention. Having it working and tested while a pro is standing there beats figuring it out alone later.

#### **✓ There's no silly question**

A good installer expects these and answers them plainly. If one seems put out by a simple question, that's worth noting.

## What I do, and what I leave to the pros

Worth saying plainly, because setup help is right in my wheelhouse.

- **What I help with:** installing the app, choosing sensible alerts, testing the Wi-Fi signal at the unit, adding family members, and explaining it all in plain English.
- **What only a licensed pro does:** the generator's electrical and gas connections, and any work on the unit itself.
- **What I never do:** ask for your passwords, or touch the wiring or gas — that's not my place or my license.

### ★ This is the kind of help I can often do remotely

App setup and alerts are perfect for a screen-share — so I can often help for \$49 without even coming out, though I'm glad to do it on a visit too. Reach me at (330) 200-8042.

## A simple monitoring setup checklist

Here's the whole setup on one page, in the order that makes it painless.

- ☐ Decide Wi-Fi or cellular, based on the signal where the unit sits.
- ☐ If using Wi-Fi, confirm a good signal at the unit — add an extender if it's weak.
- ☐ Install the maker's official app and sign in with your own password.
- ☐ Connect the unit and confirm the app shows its status.
- ☐ Choose the alerts that matter and add any family members.
- ☐ Send a test alert, and note in plain words what each one means.

### ✓ Do it once, enjoy it for years

This is a one-time setup that pays you back every storm season. A calm half-hour now buys a lot of peace of mind later — and I'm glad to sit beside you for it.

## Common Questions

The questions I hear most about monitoring a standby generator, answered plainly.

### **Q: What does monitoring actually do?**

It lets the generator report to a phone app — whether it's ready, running, lost utility power, or has a fault — so you can check at a glance instead of walking outside, and get alerts wherever you are.

### **Q: Do I need to be good with phones to use it?**

No. The alerts are simple messages, I can set the app up and write down what each one means, and your family can be the ones watching it if you'd rather.

### **Q: How does it connect — do I need Wi-Fi?**

Either your home Wi-Fi or a cellular signal, depending on the unit. Wi-Fi uses your internet but needs a signal out at the unit; cellular works without home internet at all.

### **Q: Can my kids get the alerts too?**

Yes — many systems notify family or the installer as well. It's a real comfort for adult children keeping an eye on a parent's home from far away.

### **Q: Is the app a carbon-monoxide detector?**

No. It reports the generator's status, not the air in your home. Keep battery-backup carbon-monoxide alarms tested regardless — the app is a convenience, not a safety device.

### **Q: Someone texted me a link about my generator — is that real?**

Be careful. Real alerts appear in the app; a surprise text with a link may be a scam. Don't tap it — open the app, or call your installer or me.

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

Getting comfortable with monitoring, with nothing to sell you, is exactly the kind of thing I love to help with. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and let's set it up together.

## 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 monitoring your 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

## Wi-Fi vs. Cellular Monitoring

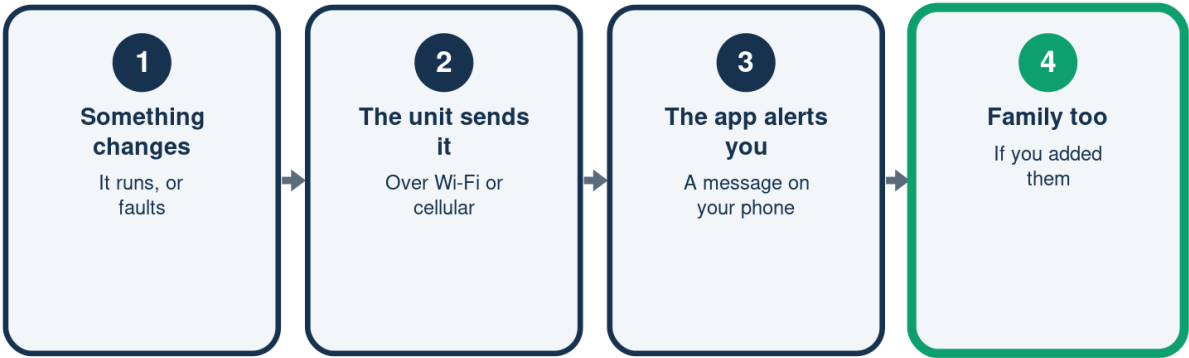
Two ways the unit gets online

|                | Home Wi-Fi      | Cellular        |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Uses           | Your internet   | A mobile signal |
| Needs          | Signal at unit  | Cell coverage   |
| Home internet? | Required        | Not needed      |
| Best when      | Router is close | Wi-Fi is weak   |

Your installer and I can help test which works at your unit.

# How an Alert Reaches You

From the unit to your phone — and your family's



Your generator can text you — and whoever you choose.

# What the App Tells You

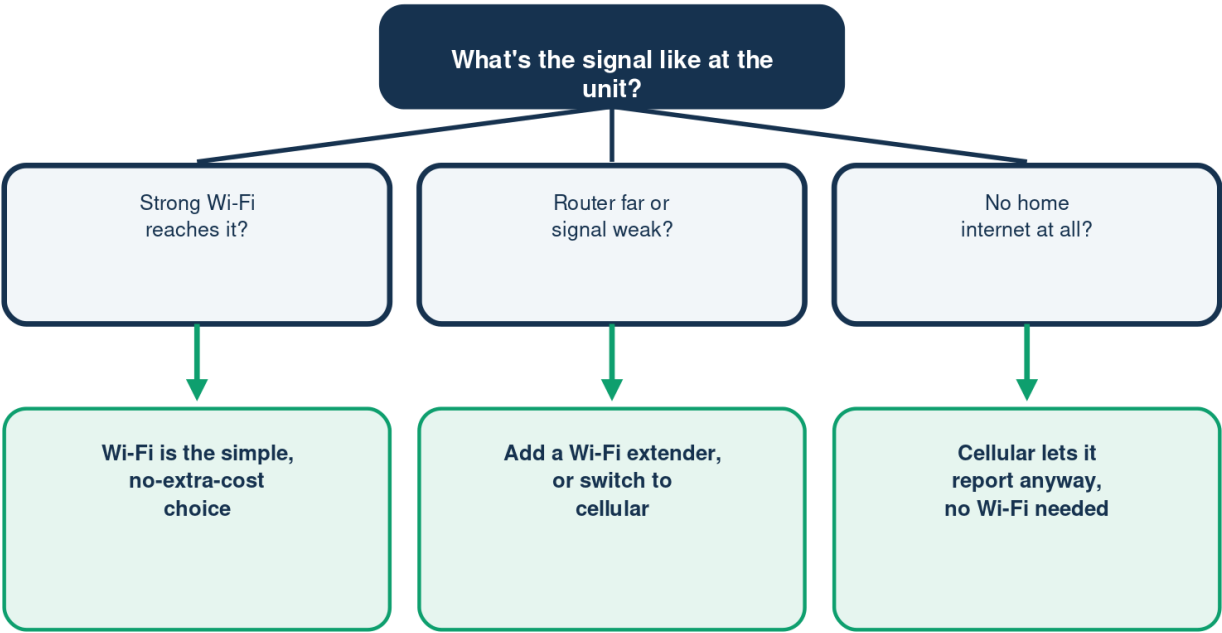
Plain messages, no graphs to study

|                 | Alert        | What it means    |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------|
| Running         | Outage or    | self-test        |
| Utility lost    | The grid     | went down        |
| Back to normal  | Grid's back, | it switched off  |
| Needs attention | A fault —    | call for service |

A glance at the app replaces a lot of wondering.

# Which Way Should It Connect?

Let the signal at the unit point the way



An app is a comfort, not a safety device — keep your CO alarms tested.

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

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### 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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