



An Extended Guide · No. 1836

Your During-the-Outage Checklist

Calm, safe, and steady in the dark

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

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

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! Read this first — the real outage dangers are quiet ones

When the power goes out, most of the real danger doesn't come from the dark — it comes from how we try to get by without it. Every year people are harmed by carbon monoxide from a generator, grill, or camp stove brought indoors or into a garage, and by fires from candles and unvented heaters. So three rules run through this whole guide. First, never burn anything indoors that is meant for outdoors — no generator, grill, charcoal, or camp stove in the house, garage, or on a porch, not even with a window open. Second, reach for a flashlight or a battery lantern instead of a candle. Third, keep working smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms on every level, with battery backup, and never ignore one. If an alarm sounds, or anyone feels dizzy, sick, or sleepy, get everyone to fresh air first and call 911. Once the power's out, safety comes first — especially the rule about never burning anything indoors. Keep it front of mind as you settle into the outage.

The power's out — here's what to do

When the lights go out, a calm, simple routine keeps everyone safe and comfortable. This guide walks you through it, from the first ten minutes to riding out a long one.

I'm Bill, and the folks who handle an outage best aren't doing anything fancy — they're just following a plan instead of improvising. This guide is that plan: report the outage, stay safe, keep the food cold, conserve your power, and check on everyone.

If you've read our before-the-storm guide and done that prep, most of this is easy. And if the outage caught you by surprise, this walks you through making the best of it, step by step.

★ Stuck mid-outage? Call me

If something comes up during an outage and you're not sure what to do, call or text me at (330) 200-8042 — I'll help however I can.

During the outage, on one page

The essentials once the power's out.

- ☐ Grab a flashlight and check it's a real outage, not just a breaker.
- ☐ Report the outage to your utility and note the time.
- ☐ Keep the fridge and freezer closed as much as possible.
- ☐ Never burn anything indoors — keep any generator outside.
- ☐ Conserve phone battery; use power banks.
- ☐ Use stored water; ration if the outage may be long.
- ☐ Stay warm or cool safely, and keep informed with a radio.
- ☐ Check on family, neighbors, and pets.

✓ **Calm and steady wins the outage**

There's rarely any need to rush. Grab a light, take a breath, and work through the steps one at a time.

The first ten minutes

A few quick checks settle what's happening and set you up for the rest.

First, grab a flashlight — not a candle. Then figure out whether it's a true outage or just your home: check whether a breaker has tripped, and glance outside to see if neighbors are dark too. If it's just your house, a tripped main breaker or a blown fuse may be the cause. If the whole area's out, it's a utility outage.

Once you know it's a real outage, note the time — it matters for food safety later — and move calmly into the rest of your routine. No need to hurry; you have time to do this right.

✓ Check the breaker first

If only your home is dark, check the electrical panel — a tripped breaker or blown fuse is a quick fix. If the neighborhood's out too, it's the utility's.

Report the outage

Letting your utility know helps them find and fix the problem.

Report the outage to your electric utility by phone, text, or their app or website if you can reach it. Reporting helps them pinpoint the problem and can speed the repair, and many utilities will send you updates on restoration. Keep your utility's number in your kit and your phone so you can reach them even if the internet's down.

✓ Keep the utility number handy

Have your electric company's outage number written in your kit. When the power's out and the internet's down, a phone call is the surest way to report it.

Safety first: carbon monoxide and fire

The most important part of any outage is not creating a bigger danger than the dark.

Never run a generator, grill, camp stove, or charcoal indoors, in the garage, or on a porch — keep all of it outside and well away, because of carbon monoxide. Use flashlights and lanterns, not candles. Make sure your carbon-monoxide and smoke alarms are working. Our carbon-monoxide and lighting guides cover this fully — it's the heart of outage safety.

! Keep all burning outside, and skip the candles

Carbon monoxide from indoor burning and fires from candles are the two deadliest outage mistakes. Keep generators and grills outside and far away, and use battery light.

Keep the fridge and freezer closed

The simplest, most valuable habit of any outage.

Every time you open the fridge or freezer, cold escapes and your food's safe window shrinks. Kept closed, a fridge holds food safely for about four hours and a full freezer for about 48. Decide what you need before you open the door, and move a day's food to a cooler so the fridge stays shut. Our food-and-cooking guide has the full timing.

✓ Plan the opening before you open it

Know what you're grabbing before you open the fridge, then open it once and close it fast. Every peek costs you cold air and safe time.

Conserve your power and devices

Make your batteries last by using them wisely from the start.

Put phones in low-power mode, dim the screens, and send texts rather than calling. Keep one phone on for information and let the others rest. Lean on power banks, and charge from the car — outdoors — if you need to. Our device-charging guide covers stretching your power through a long outage.

✓ Ration battery from the first hour

Don't wait until phones are low to start conserving. Switch on battery-saver mode right away, and your power lasts far longer.

Managing your water

Use your stored water wisely, especially on a well.

If you're on a well, the pump is off, so you're on your stored water — ration it sensibly between drinking, cooking, and washing, and use that filled bathtub for flushing. In town, the tap may keep running, but listen for any boil-water notice. Our water guide covers keeping water safe and making questionable water drinkable.

✓ A bucket flushes a toilet

Pour about a gallon of water briskly into the bowl and it flushes on its own. That's what the filled bathtub is for — no working water line needed.

Stay warm or cool — safely

Comfort matters, but never at the cost of safety.

In winter, close off and heat one room, layer up, and use only heat sources rated safe for indoor use — never an oven or unvented burning. In summer, find the coolest spot, drink water, and cool your body with damp cloths and a battery fan. Our heating and staying-cool guides cover both, with a close eye on the vulnerable.

✓ One room, warm or cool

Rather than fighting the whole house, make one room comfortable and gather there. It's easier to keep one room warm or cool — and cozier, too.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

The during-outage routine is the same everywhere, but a longer rural outage means pacing yourself for the long haul.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town, outages are often shorter, so the routine is mostly about comfort and keeping food safe until the power returns.

- A shorter outage rarely tests your supplies hard.
- Report it and settle in — restoration is often quick.
- Neighbors are close for sharing news, ice, or a hand.
- Still follow the safety rules — they never relax.

If you are out in the country on a well

In the country, outages run longer, so pace your supplies and power for days, and keep a closer eye on water.

- Ration water carefully — the well pump is off.
- Pace your food, fuel, and battery power for a longer haul.
- Cycle a generator between the fridge and freezer to save fuel.
- Check on isolated neighbors, since help is farther away.

★ Riding out a long one? I can help

Whether it's a few hours in town or days in the country, I'll help you make a during-outage routine that fits. Call (330) 200-8042.

Light the house safely

Good light keeps everyone safe and calm through the dark hours.

Use flashlights to move around, a lantern to light the room where everyone gathers, and a headlamp for tasks and stairs. Light the paths and bathroom so no one trips — falls are a common outage injury. Keep candles as a last resort only. Our lighting guide covers setting it all up.

✓ Light the paths to prevent falls

Make sure the hall, stairs, and bathroom are lit so no one stumbles in the dark. A tripping fall is one of the most avoidable outage injuries.

Stay informed

Knowing what's happening helps you make good decisions through the outage.

Keep your NOAA weather radio and a battery AM/FM radio going for weather warnings, restoration updates, and any official instructions. Your car radio is another source while you charge a phone outside. Trust official word over rumor. Our weather-radio guide covers staying informed when the usual channels are down.

✓ Check for a restoration estimate

Many utilities share an estimated restoration time. Knowing whether it's an hour or a day helps you decide how hard to ration and whether to relocate.

Check on people and pets

An outage is about people as much as power — keep everyone accounted for.

Check in with family through your communication plan, and look in on older or unwell neighbors, especially in heat or cold. Keep kids reassured and occupied, and keep pets close, calm, and comfortable. A few check-ins go a long way, and catching a problem early — someone too cold, a pet in distress — can prevent something worse.

★ A knock on a neighbor's door matters

In a long outage, checking on an older neighbor can make all the difference. If you'd like help setting up a check-in plan, call (330) 200-8042.

A simple rhythm for a long outage

For an outage that stretches on, a loose routine keeps things steady.

Roughly when	What to do
Morning	Move a day's food to the cooler; check in with family
Midday	Charge a phone; catch the news; check on neighbors
As needed	Refill water; tend any generator, off and cool to refuel
Evening	Light the gathering room; a warm or cool-down; settle in

✓ **Routine is calming**

A gentle daily rhythm — meals, check-ins, charging, winding down — makes a long outage feel manageable, especially for children and older adults.

Rationing supplies for the long haul

If an outage may run long, pace your supplies from the start.

- Eat perishable fridge food first, then frozen, then shelf-stable.
- Use water sensibly — drinking first, then cooking and washing.
- Keep one phone on for information; rest the others.
- Run a generator only as needed, and cycle its loads.
- Pace fuel and batteries as if the outage could last a while.

✓ Assume long, hope short

Pacing your supplies as if the outage might last a while costs you nothing if it's short — and saves you if it's long.

Comfort, morale, and boredom

Keeping spirits up is part of getting through a long outage well.

A long, dark evening is easier with a few comforts: a warm drink made safely, a favorite snack, board games or cards by lantern light, a book, or downloaded entertainment used sparingly. Keep the mood calm and even a little fun, especially for children — an outage can become an adventure with the right attitude.

✓ Make an evening of it

Games by lantern light, stories, or a shared snack turn a dark evening into a memory rather than a hardship. A good attitude is contagious.

Watch for hazards

A few dangers deserve a watchful eye through an outage.

- Treat any downed power line as live and deadly — stay far away.
- Watch for carbon-monoxide symptoms if anything's been burning.
- Don't eat perishable food that's been too warm too long.
- Mind trip hazards and candle flames in the dark.
- Be wary of scammers or price-gougers after a storm.

! Stay far from downed lines

After a storm, assume every fallen wire is live. Keep everyone well away, don't drive over them, and report them to your utility.

Knowing when to leave

Sometimes the right move during an outage is to go somewhere with power.

If the house is becoming dangerously cold or hot, if medical equipment backup is running low, or if staying no longer feels safe, plan to relocate to a shelter, a relative's, or a warming or cooling center. Decide your triggers ahead of time, leave before it's urgent, and take your go-bags and pets. And if anyone's health is at risk, call 911.

★ There's no shame in leaving

Going somewhere safe and comfortable is a smart choice, not a defeat. If you'd like help planning where you'd go, call (330) 200-8042.

Keep a simple log

Jotting a few things down makes decisions — and any claim — easier.

Note when the power went out, when a generator started, and roughly what you've used. The outage start time helps you judge food safety, and a record of any damage or spoiled food supports an insurance claim later. A scrap of paper and a pen are all it takes — our documents guide covers claims.

✓ Write down the start time

Knowing exactly when the power went out makes every food-safety decision clearer. Jot it down the moment you confirm the outage.

Your printable during-the-outage checklist

The whole routine, in one place to keep.

- ☐ Grabbed a light; confirmed a real outage; noted the time.
- ☐ Reported the outage to the utility.
- ☐ Nothing burning indoors; any generator outside and far away.
- ☐ Fridge and freezer kept closed; a day's food in a cooler.
- ☐ Phones conserving; power banks in use.
- ☐ Stored water used wisely; the tub for flushing.
- ☐ One room kept warm or cool; paths lit; radio on.
- ☐ Family, neighbors, and pets checked on.

★ Need a hand during an outage?

If something comes up mid-outage, I'm a call away. A first visit is a flat \$99, and I can often help on-screen for \$49. Call (330) 200-8042.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most once the power's out.

Q: What's the first thing to do when the power goes out?

Grab a flashlight, then check whether it's a real outage or just your home — look at the breaker panel and whether neighbors are dark. Once you know it's a utility outage, note the time and report it to your electric company.

Q: How long will my food stay safe?

About four hours in the fridge and around 48 hours in a full freezer, if you keep the doors closed. Move a day's food to a cooler so the fridge stays shut, and note the outage start time to judge safety later.

Q: How do I keep my phone alive through the outage?

Switch on low-power mode right away, dim the screen, and text instead of calling. Keep one phone on for information and rest the others, lean on power banks, and charge from the car outdoors if needed.

Q: Is it safe to run a generator during the outage?

Only outdoors, at least 20 feet from the house, with the exhaust pointed away from windows and doors — never in a garage or on a porch. Carbon monoxide is deadly, so the outdoor-only rule is absolute. See our generator guides.

Q: When should I leave for somewhere with power?

If the house is getting dangerously hot or cold, if medical equipment backup is running low, or if staying feels unsafe. Decide your triggers ahead of time, leave before it's urgent, and take your go-bags and pets. Call 911 if health is at risk.

★ Let's get you through it

An outage is far easier with a steady routine. Call or text (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you handle whatever comes up.

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 handling a power outage as it happens 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.

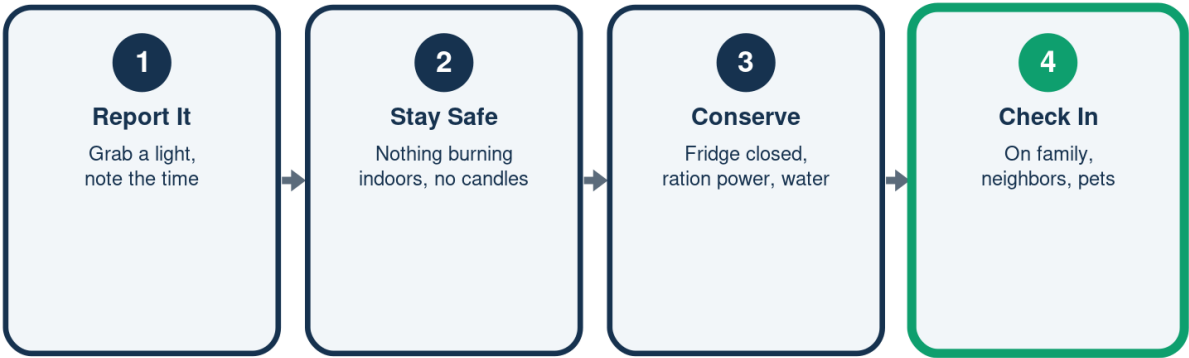
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day,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

During the Outage

A calm routine, step by step



Follow the plan instead of improvising — calm and steady.

During-Outage Do's

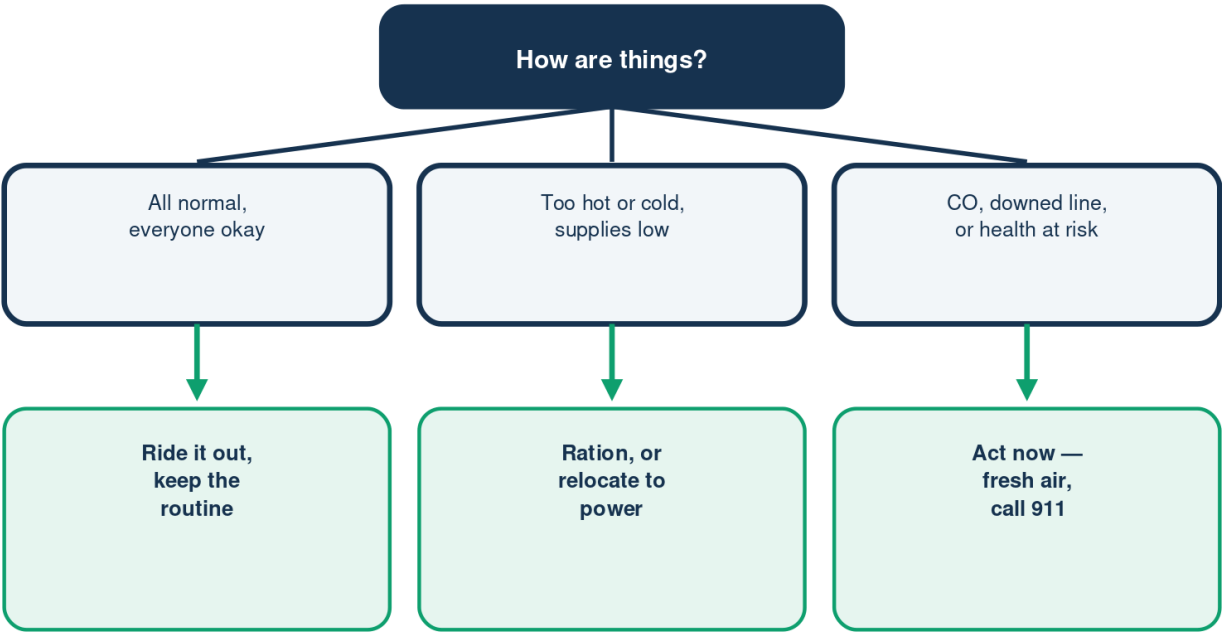
The habits that keep you safe and comfortable

Do this	
Safety	Keep all burning outside
Food	Keep the fridge closed
Power	Low-power mode, power banks
Water	Use stored, ration it
People	Check on everyone

The safety rules never relax, however long the outage.

Something Feel Off?

Know when to ride it out and when to act



Suspect carbon monoxide? Get to fresh air first, then call 911.

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

Conserve: Power, Water, Food

Pace your supplies from the start

How to stretch it	
Power	Low-power mode, one phone on
Water	Drink first, then cook, wash
Food	Fridge, then frozen, then
Fuel	Run a generator only as needed

Assume the outage could be long — pacing costs nothing.



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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