



An Extended Guide · No. 1820

Lighting Your Home Safely in an Outage

Flashlights over
candles, every time

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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. In this guide especially: reach for a flashlight or a battery lantern, not a candle. Candles are one of the most common causes of house fires during outages.

Let's light your home safely

When the power goes out, light is the first thing everyone reaches for — and the safest light is battery light, kept where you can find it in the dark.

I'm Bill, and this guide is a friendly tour of your options: flashlights to move around by, lanterns to light a whole room, headlamps to keep your hands free, and the batteries that power them all. We'll also talk honestly about candles, which feel cozy but cause real harm.

None of this is expensive or complicated. A few good lights in known spots turn a dark, stumbling evening into an ordinary one. Let's set you up.

★ Not sure what to buy?

There's no need for anything fancy. If you'd like help choosing a few good lights and setting them up around the house, call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

Lighting your home, on one page

The essentials of safe outage lighting.

- ❑ Keep several flashlights in known spots around the house.
- ❑ Add a lantern or two to light a whole room.
- ❑ A headlamp keeps your hands free for tasks and stairs.
- ❑ Store plenty of the right batteries alongside your lights.
- ❑ Choose flashlights over candles — candles are a fire risk.
- ❑ Light the paths and stairs so no one trips in the dark.
- ❑ Keep a light on every nightstand and by every exit.
- ❑ Test your lights and freshen batteries twice a year.

✓ A light within arm's reach of every bed

The first job of outage lighting is simply getting safely out of bed and down the hall. Keep a working flashlight on every nightstand.

Why battery light beats candles

Candles feel like the classic outage light. They're also the most dangerous one.

An open flame in a dark, busy house is a real hazard. Candles are a leading cause of home fires during outages — knocked over by a pet or a sleeve, left burning when someone dozes off, or set too close to curtains or paper. In the dark, with people moving around, the risk goes up, not down.

Battery lights give you all the glow with none of the flame. Flashlights, lanterns, and headlamps are brighter, safer, and won't start a fire if they tip over. They're the heart of a good lighting plan.

! If you keep candles, keep them as a last resort

It's fine to have candles as a distant backup. But they should never be the main plan — never left unattended, never near anything that can burn, and always out before anyone sleeps.

Flashlights: your everyday outage light

The humble flashlight is still the workhorse — keep several.

A good flashlight is bright, simple to switch on, and comfortable to hold. Keep several around the house so one is always within reach: a nightstand, the kitchen, by the door, in the car. Larger ones throw more light; small ones slip in a pocket or purse.

Look for lights that are easy on older hands — a comfortable grip, a switch you don't have to fumble for, and not too heavy to hold up. Modern LED flashlights are bright, sip batteries, and last for years.

✓ One per person, at least

In an outage, everyone wanders off with a light. Have at least one flashlight per person so nobody's left in the dark waiting their turn.

Lanterns: light for a whole room

A flashlight lights a spot. A lantern lights a room — and that changes how an evening feels.

A battery lantern sits on a table and casts a soft glow all around, so a family can eat, read, or play cards together instead of pointing flashlights at each other. One or two lanterns make the main living space feel almost normal.

Set a lantern where its light spreads farthest — on a counter or a high shelf, or near a light-colored wall or ceiling that bounces the glow. Rechargeable lanterns are handy if you keep them charged; battery ones are ready anytime.

✓ Bounce the light off the ceiling

Aim or place a lantern so it lights the ceiling, and the whole room glows softly. It's a simple trick that makes one lantern do more.

Headlamps: light where you're looking

The unsung hero of outage lighting — because it frees both hands.

A headlamp straps to your forehead and shines wherever you look, so your hands are free to carry things, cook, fix something, or hold a railing on the stairs. For anyone doing tasks in the dark, it beats juggling a flashlight.

They're light, inexpensive, and especially helpful for older adults, who can keep both hands steady on a cane, a railing, or a countertop while still seeing clearly. Keep one for each person if you can.

✓ Perfect for the stairs

Going up or down stairs in an outage is one of the riskier moments. A headlamp lights the steps while both hands stay free for the railing.

Batteries: the fuel for your lights

The finest flashlight is useless with dead batteries. Plan for them.

Take stock of what sizes your lights use and keep a generous supply of each — it's frustrating to have five flashlights and batteries for none of them. Try to standardize on one or two common sizes so your spares fit everything.

Store batteries in a cool, dry spot, and check them when you check your kit. Rechargeable batteries and lights are great if you keep them charged; keep some ordinary disposables too, since they're ready to go with no power at all.

✓ Standardize your battery sizes

If most of your lights take the same size battery, one box of spares covers them all. It's a small choice that saves a lot of scrambling.

Lighting paths and avoiding trips

A surprising amount of outage risk is simply tripping in a dark house.

Falls are one of the real dangers of an outage, especially for older adults. Light the routes people actually walk — the hall to the bathroom, the stairs, the path to the kitchen — and clear anything that could catch a foot in the dark.

Plug-in rechargeable nightlights that switch on automatically when the power fails are wonderful for this: they light hallways and bathrooms the instant the lights go out, with nothing to fumble for.

✓ Automatic outage nightlights are worth it

A few nightlights that come on by themselves when the power drops keep the hallways and bathroom lit from the very first second — no stumbling to find a switch.

If you do use a candle, use it carefully

Battery light is far safer, but if you ever fall back on a candle, these rules keep it as safe as possible.

- Set it in a sturdy, non-tip holder on a hard, clear surface.
- Keep it well away from curtains, paper, bedding, and anything that burns.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended, not even for a minute.
- Keep it out of reach of children and pets.
- Blow it out before you sleep or leave the room — every time.
- Never use a candle where you might smell gas.

! A flashlight is always the better choice

There's no situation where a candle is safer than a flashlight. If you have any battery light at all, use it first and keep the candles in reserve.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Everyone needs good battery light. How much you need, and how long it has to last, shifts a bit with where you live.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town, streetlights and neighbors' generators often lend a little borrowed glow, and outages tend to be shorter — so a modest set of lights covers most evenings.

- A few flashlights and a lantern usually see you through.
- Shorter outages mean you'll rarely drain your batteries.
- Ambient light from the street can help on the main floor.
- Restocking batteries is a quick trip once stores reopen.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country, nights are truly dark, and outages run longer — so plan for more light and more batteries to feed it.

- Keep more lights and a deeper stash of batteries.
- Rural darkness is complete — good lanterns really earn their keep.
- Add outdoor lighting for chores, animals, and reaching a generator.
- Consider rechargeable and solar lights you can top up by day.

★ Let's light your home right

Town or country, I'll help you pick a few good lights and place them where they'll actually help. Call (330) 200-8042.

Where to place light around the house

A little thought about placement makes a few lights feel like plenty.

Pick one main room to light well with a lantern, so there's a comfortable gathering spot. Keep a flashlight or nightlight in the bathroom, light the stairs, and put a light by each exit in case you need to leave. The goal is that no essential path is ever pitch black.

✓ One bright room to gather in

Rather than dimly lighting the whole house, light one room well and let it be the family's home base for the evening. It's cozier and it saves batteries.

Lighting for seniors and low vision

Good outage lighting matters most for the eyes that need the most light.

Older eyes need more light and are more bothered by glare. Choose bright lights with a broad, even beam rather than a narrow harsh one, and place lanterns where they light a room softly without shining straight into anyone's eyes. Big, easy switches help arthritic hands.

Keep the most-used lights exactly where they're needed — nightstand, bathroom, favorite chair — so there's no hunting in the dark. For anyone with low vision, a headlamp plus a good lantern is a reassuring combination.

★ Let's set it up for easy hands and eyes

If you or a loved one struggles with small switches or dim light, I'll help pick lights that are easy to use and place them well. Call (330) 200-8042.

Solar and hand-crank lights

A couple of lights that never need a fresh battery are a nice backstop.

Small solar lights charge on a windowsill by day and glow at night, and hand-crank lights give you light from a minute of winding — no batteries at all. Neither replaces a good flashlight, but both are handy for a long outage when batteries run low.

Many hand-crank weather radios include a light and can even charge a phone a little, which our weather-radio guide covers. A garden solar light brought indoors can serve as a gentle nightlight in a pinch.

✓ Charge solar lights by the window

Line up a few small solar lights on a sunny sill each morning during a long outage, and you'll have free, flame-free light every evening.

Light for children in an outage

A little light of their own turns a scary dark night into an adventure.

Give each child their own small flashlight or headlamp — it keeps them safer on stairs and calmer in the dark, and it gives them a job they can feel proud of. Glow sticks are a fun, flameless, worry-free light for kids, and double as bedtime nightlights.

✓ Make it a little fun

Reading by lantern, shadow puppets, a flashlight treasure hunt — a bit of playfulness helps children feel safe when the power's out, and keeps everyone's spirits up.

Light for outside the house

Some of your lighting needs are out the back door.

You may need to reach a generator, check on animals, bring in firewood, or simply see the steps outside. A good handheld light or a headlamp covers this. Battery-powered motion lights near doors and paths add safe, automatic light without any wiring.

If you run a generator, remember it lives well away from the house, so a reliable path light out to it matters — our generator guides cover safe placement in full.

! Light the path to the generator

If you'll be tending a generator in the dark and weather, a headlamp and a clear, lit path to it help you do it safely — and keep the generator itself well away from the house.

Keeping rechargeable lights charged

Rechargeable lights are wonderful — as long as they're actually charged when you need them.

If you rely on rechargeable flashlights or lanterns, keep them topped up so they're ready, and have a way to recharge during a long outage — a power bank, a car charger, or a solar panel, as our device-charging and power-options guides describe. Keep some ordinary battery lights too, as a no-charge-needed backup.

✓ Charged now beats clever later

A rechargeable lantern only helps if it's charged when the power quits. Give your rechargeables a top-up whenever a storm is in the forecast.

Keeping your lighting gear ready

Lights fail you only when they've been forgotten in a drawer for years.

- Test every flashlight and lantern twice a year.
- Freshen or recharge batteries on the same schedule.
- Store spare batteries in a cool, dry, known spot.
- Keep lights in consistent places so everyone knows where they are.
- Replace any light that flickers or won't hold a charge.

✓ Test at the clock changes

Pair your light check with changing the clocks twice a year. Flip every switch, swap tired batteries, and you're set for the next six months.

Good lighting for very little

Safe light is one of the most affordable parts of any kit.

A couple of inexpensive LED flashlights, one decent lantern, a headlamp or two, and a box of batteries make a complete lighting kit for very little. You almost certainly own some of this already — gather it into one spot and fill the gaps a light at a time.

✓ Start with what's in the junk drawer

Round up the flashlights you already own, put fresh batteries in them, and you're most of the way there. Add a lantern when you can.

A simple room-by-room light plan

Here's a sensible place for a light in each part of the house.

Spot	A good light to keep there
Each nightstand	A flashlight within arm's reach
Living room	A lantern to light the whole room
Bathroom and halls	Automatic nightlights, a flashlight
Stairs	A headlamp, so hands stay on the railing
By each exit	A flashlight, in case you must leave

✓ **Walk it through once**

Take a lap of your home imagining the power's out. Wherever you'd wish for a light, put one there now.

Your printable lighting checklist

Everything for safe outage light, in one place.

- ☐ A flashlight on every nightstand and by every exit.
- ☐ One or two lanterns to light main rooms.
- ☐ A headlamp for each person, for hands-free tasks and stairs.
- ☐ A generous supply of the right batteries.
- ☐ Automatic nightlights for halls and the bathroom.
- ☐ Candles kept only as a careful last resort.
- ☐ Paths and stairs planned so no one trips in the dark.
- ☐ A twice-a-year test-and-freshen habit.

★ Want help lighting your home?

I'll help you choose a few good lights, place them where they help most, and set up automatic nightlights for the halls. A first visit is a flat \$99. Call (330) 200-8042.

Common Questions

The lighting questions folks ask me most.

Q: Are candles really that dangerous in an outage?

Yes — candles are a leading cause of home fires during outages, knocked over or left burning by accident. Battery lights give you the same glow with none of the flame, so keep candles only as a careful last resort.

Q: What lights should every home have?

A flashlight for each person, one or two lanterns to light whole rooms, a headlamp or two for hands-free tasks, and plenty of batteries. Automatic nightlights for halls and bathrooms are a wonderful addition.

Q: What's the best light for older adults?

A bright, glare-free lantern for the room plus a headlamp for the stairs is a reassuring pair. Look for big, easy switches and a comfortable grip, and keep the most-used lights right where they're needed.

Q: How many batteries should I keep?

Enough to run your lights for a long outage and then some. It helps to standardize on one or two common sizes so a single box of spares fits most of your lights.

Q: Are rechargeable or solar lights worth it?

They're great as part of the mix — just keep rechargeables charged and have a way to top them up during a long outage. Keep some ordinary battery lights too, since they work with no charging at all.

★ Happy to help you see clearly

If lighting your home for an outage feels like guesswork, call or text (330) 200-8042. We'll get you set up with a few good lights in the right spots.

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 lighting your home safely in an outage 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.

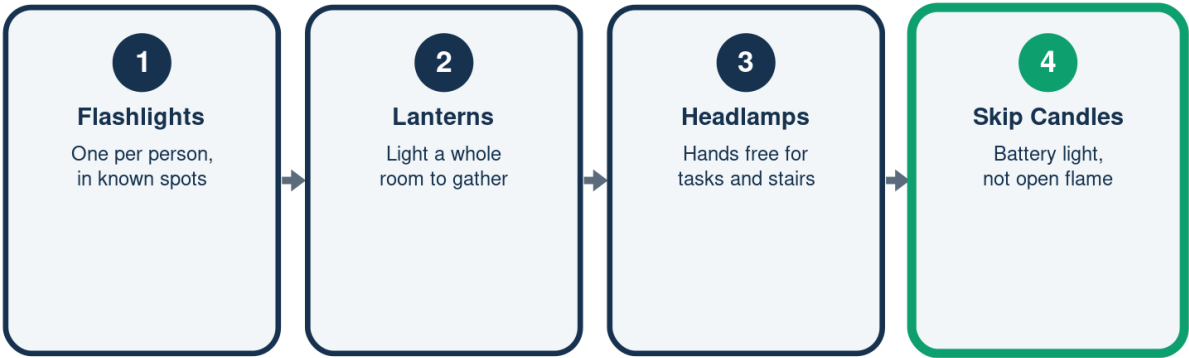
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Light Every Room Safely

A simple, flame-free lighting plan



Battery light gives the glow with none of the fire risk.

Which Light for Which Job

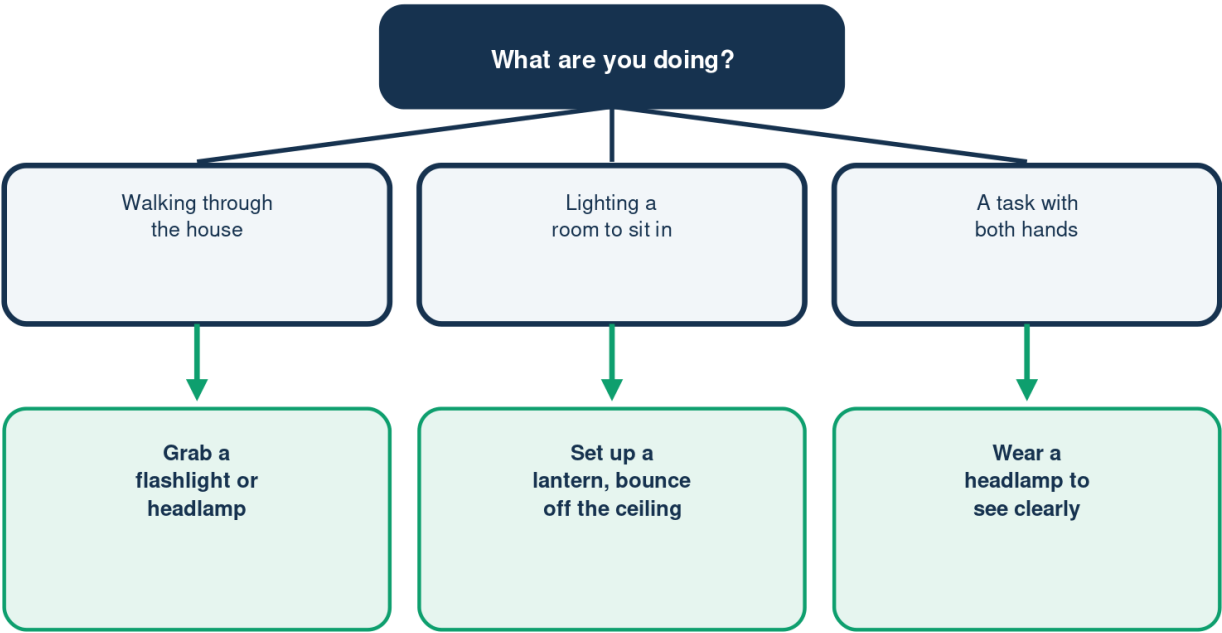
Match the light to what you're doing

Best tool	
Moving around	A handheld flashlight
Lighting a room	A table lantern
Hands-free task	A headlamp
Halls at night	Automatic nightlights
For each child	Their own small light

A flashlight, a lantern, and a headlamp cover nearly everything.

What Light Should I Reach For?

Pick the right tool for the moment



Reach for battery light first — keep candles only as a backup.

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

Battery Light vs. Candles

Why flashlights win every time

	Battery light	Candles
Fire risk	None	A leading outage fire cause
Brightness	Bright, steady	Dim, flickering
If it tips	Just rolls away	Can start a fire

If you have any battery light, use it first.



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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

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

— *Bill*



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