



An Extended Guide · No. 1826

Staying Cool in a Summer Outage

Beat the heat, spot the danger

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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. A summer outage brings its own danger — heat itself. This guide is about staying cool and spotting heat illness before it becomes serious.

Let's keep you cool and safe

When the power goes out on a hot, humid Ohio afternoon, the air conditioning stops — and a house can heat up fast. Staying cool isn't just about comfort; in a real heat wave, it's about safety.

I'm Bill, and heat is easy to underestimate. It creeps up quietly, and it's hardest on older adults, young children, and anyone who's unwell. This guide covers simple ways to stay cool without air conditioning, and how to spot heat illness before it turns dangerous.

We'll look at finding the coolest spot in your home, cooling your own body, staying hydrated, and knowing when it's time to go somewhere with air conditioning. All of it is doable, and most of it is free.

★ Let's plan for the hot ones

If you'd like help thinking through how you'd stay cool in a summer outage, especially for an older loved one, I'm glad to help. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

Staying cool, on one page

The essentials for a hot outage.

- ☐ Move to the coolest part of the house — often the lowest floor.
- ☐ Close blinds and curtains by day; open windows in the cool of night.
- ☐ Drink water steadily, before you feel thirsty.
- ☐ Cool your body with wet cloths, a cool shower, or feet in water.
- ☐ Wear loose, light clothing.
- ☐ Use battery fans, and avoid heavy activity in the heat.
- ☐ Know the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
- ☐ If it's too hot to stay safe, go somewhere with air conditioning.

✓ Heat is hardest on the vulnerable

Older adults, infants, and anyone unwell feel heat's effects fastest and may not notice. Check on them often and keep them coolest.

Why summer heat deserves respect

Heat is a quiet hazard — it doesn't roar like a storm, but it can be just as serious.

When a home loses air conditioning in a heat wave, indoor temperatures can climb to dangerous levels, especially in upper floors and closed-up rooms. The body struggles to cool itself in heat and humidity, and heat illness can come on gradually until it's suddenly serious.

Those most at risk are older adults, infants and young children, people with chronic illnesses, and anyone taking certain medicines. If that's you or someone in your home, take heat especially seriously and plan ahead.

✓ Don't wait to feel miserable

Start your cooling steps early in a hot outage, before the house and your body heat up. It's much easier to stay cool than to cool back down.

Find the coolest spot in the house

Every home has cooler and hotter parts — spend the hot hours in the cool ones.

Heat rises, so lower floors and basements stay cooler. Rooms on the shaded side of the house, away from the afternoon sun, stay cooler too. During a hot outage, gather where it's coolest and ride out the worst of the afternoon there.

A basement, if you have one, is often the coolest place in the house and can be a real refuge on a scorching day. Bring water, light, and something to sit or lie on, and settle in where the air is coolest.

✓ Head downstairs when it's hot

If your home has a basement or a shaded lower room, that's your cool refuge. It can be many degrees cooler than an upstairs bedroom.

Cooling your own body

You don't have to cool the whole house — just cool yourself.

- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Put a cool, damp cloth on your neck, wrists, and forehead.
- Take a cool shower or bath, or soak your feet in cool water.
- Sit in front of a battery fan, especially with a damp cloth on your skin.
- Rest and avoid heavy activity during the hottest hours.
- A spray bottle of water for a light mist feels wonderful.

Cooling the pulse points — neck, wrists, and the like — with a damp cloth helps cool the blood as it passes through. Combined with a little airflow, it makes a real difference to how you feel.

✓ Wet skin plus a breeze is powerful

A damp cloth on the skin with a fan blowing across it mimics how sweat cools you. It's one of the most effective ways to cool down without air conditioning.

Drink water — steadily

Staying hydrated is the single most important thing in a hot outage.

Drink water regularly, before you feel thirsty — thirst lags behind what your body needs in the heat. Keep a bottle nearby and sip through the day. Go easy on alcohol and heavy caffeine, which can work against you, and be mindful that some medicines affect how your body handles heat and fluids.

This is exactly why your water plan matters in summer, too — our water guide covers storing enough. On a well, remember the pump is down, so have that stored water ready for a hot-weather outage.

! Don't wait for thirst

In the heat, feeling thirsty means you're already behind. Sip water regularly through the day, and watch that older adults and children keep drinking too.

Block the sun by day, let air in at night

Working with the day's rhythm keeps a house far cooler.

During the day, close blinds, curtains, and shades on the sunny side to keep heat out — sunlight through windows heats a room quickly. Keep windows and doors shut against the hot outside air while it's hotter out than in.

In the cool of evening and overnight, open windows on opposite sides of the house to let cooler air flow through, and close them again before the day heats up. This simple rhythm can keep a home noticeably cooler with no power at all.

✓ Close up by day, open up at night

Trap the cool overnight air by opening windows after dark, then shut everything and pull the shades before the sun climbs. It's free air conditioning of a sort.

Battery fans and cooling gear

A little moving air goes a long way toward comfort.

Battery-powered and rechargeable fans keep air moving when the power's out, and a fan blowing across a damp cloth or a pan of cool water feels even better. Cooling towels that you wet and snap, misting bottles, and a cooler of cold drinks all help. Keep fan batteries charged, as with the rest of your kit.

In extreme heat and high humidity, a fan alone may not be enough to prevent heat illness — that's when cooling your body directly and seeking a truly cool place matter most. But for comfort in ordinary hot weather, a fan is a welcome friend.

✓ A fan over a pan of cool water

Set a fan to blow across a shallow pan of cool water or a bowl of ice, and it pushes cooler, moister air your way — a simple homemade cooler.

Recognizing heat illness

Knowing the warning signs — and telling them apart — can save a life.

Heat exhaustion shows up as heavy sweating, cool and clammy skin, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, and a fast, weak pulse. Move the person to the coolest spot, have them rest, sip water, loosen clothing, and cool the skin with damp cloths. If it doesn't improve soon, get medical help.

Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency: very hot skin that may be dry or damp, a high body temperature, confusion, a fast strong pulse, and possibly passing out. Call 911 immediately, move the person to the coolest place, and cool them aggressively with water and cloths while you wait.

! Heat stroke: call 911 right away

Confusion, very hot skin, or fainting in the heat is a medical emergency. Call 911 at once and cool the person as fast as you can while help is on the way.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Staying cool works the same everywhere, but town and country each bring a wrinkle — heat that lingers in town, and longer outages in the country.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town, buildings and pavement hold heat, so a city can stay warm into the night — but a cooling center or air-conditioned store is usually close.

- Neighborhoods can hold heat well after sunset, so cool the house at night when you can.
- A public cooling place is often a short trip away.
- Shorter outages mean the house may not fully heat up.
- Check on elderly neighbors, who are most at risk in a heat wave.

If you are out in the country on a well

In the country, outages run longer and a cool public place is farther — but shade trees and a basement can be real assets.

- Longer outages mean planning to stay cool for days, not hours.
- Use a basement or shaded rooms as your cool refuge.
- Remember the well pump is down — have stored water for the heat.
- A cooling center may be a longer drive, so decide early if you'll go.

★ Let's make a hot-weather plan

Whether you're in town or out in the country, I'll help you plan to stay cool and safe through a summer outage. Call (330) 200-8042.

Who's most at risk in the heat

Some people feel heat's effects far sooner — keep the coolest eye on them.

- Older adults, who sense heat less and cool less easily.
- Infants and young children, who heat up quickly.
- Anyone with heart, lung, or other chronic conditions.
- People taking medicines that affect heat or fluids.
- Anyone doing hard physical work or without good airflow.

If any of these describes you or someone in your home, treat a hot outage as a real risk. Check on vulnerable people often, keep them in the coolest spot, and don't hesitate to head for air conditioning if the heat climbs.

★ Check on the vulnerable often

In a heat wave, a quick check on an older parent or neighbor can catch trouble early. If you'd like help making a plan for someone at risk, call (330) 200-8042.

When to go somewhere cool

In a serious heat wave, the safest move may be to leave the hot house behind.

If your home is getting dangerously hot and you can't keep it safely cool — especially with older adults, infants, or anyone unwell — go spend the hottest hours somewhere with air conditioning: a cooling center, a library, a store, or a relative's home. Know your options ahead of time, and don't try to tough out extreme heat.

★ Leaving is the smart move sometimes

There's no shame in spending a hot afternoon at an air-conditioned place and coming home in the evening. If you'd like help finding cooling options near you, call (330) 200-8042.

Food safety is trickier in the heat

Warm weather shortens the clock on your fridge and freezer.

In hot weather, a warm house means food in a powerless fridge warms up faster, so watch the timing closely — our food-and-cooking guide covers the four-hour fridge rule and the freezer's longer hold. Keep coolers in the shade, and lean on shelf-stable no-cook foods so you don't have to worry as much.

✓ Shade your coolers

A cooler baking in the sun loses its cold fast. Keep coolers and any food in the coolest, shadiest spot you have.

Keeping pets cool, too

Your animals can overheat quickly, so include them in your cooling plan.

Keep pets in the coolest part of the house with plenty of cool water, and never leave them in a hot car or a sun-baked room. Watch for heavy panting, drooling, or weakness, which can signal overheating. Our pets guide covers keeping animals safe and comfortable through an outage in more detail.

! Never leave a pet in a hot car

A parked car heats up to deadly levels within minutes, even with windows cracked. Never leave a pet — or a person — in a hot car during a summer outage.

Staying cool enough to sleep

Hot, sticky nights make rest hard — a few tricks help.

Sleep in the coolest room, on the lowest floor if you can. Open windows for a cross-breeze overnight, use a battery fan, and try a damp cloth or light, breathable bedding. A cool shower before bed and plenty of water nearby help you settle. Rest matters, so it's worth a little effort to make the night bearable.

✓ A cool shower before bed

Rinsing off in cool water before you lie down lowers your body temperature and makes falling asleep in the heat much easier.

Setting up your cool room

Just like a winter warm room, a summer cool room gives everyone a refuge.

- ❑ Pick the coolest room — lowest floor, shaded, or the basement.
- ❑ Keep its blinds and curtains closed through the day.
- ❑ Bring in water, a battery fan, and damp cloths.
- ❑ Set up somewhere comfortable to rest out of the heat.
- ❑ Gather the household, and the pets, in the cool room.
- ❑ Open it to the night air, then close it up before the day heats.

✓ One cool room for the hot hours

Rather than roaming a hot house, make one cool room the family's afternoon base. It's easier to keep one room comfortable than the whole house.

Powering a fan or air conditioner with backup

If you have backup power, it can run cooling — but know the difference between a fan and an air conditioner.

A fan sips power and is easy for a battery station or modest generator to run. A window or central air conditioner, on the other hand, is a big load with a large starting surge — running one takes serious backup power, sized correctly. Our power-options and generator guides cover what it takes to run big loads like air conditioning.

For many homes, running a couple of fans and cooling the body is a far more practical goal than powering the air conditioning. But if staying cool is a medical necessity, that's worth planning carefully.

★ Cooling as a medical need deserves a plan

If someone in your home must stay cool for their health, let's plan the power for it properly — and a backup place to go. Call (330) 200-8042.

Staying cool for very little

Most of what keeps you cool costs little or nothing.

Shade, airflow, wet cloths, cool water, loose clothing, and a basement refuge are all free. A battery fan and a couple of cooling towels are inexpensive additions. The most valuable steps — staying hydrated and moving to the cool spots — don't cost a thing.

✓ Free cooling comes first

Before buying anything, use what's free: close the blinds by day, open up at night, drink water, and head to the coolest room. That's most of the battle.

Your before-a-hot-outage steps

When heat and a possible outage are in the forecast, get ready.

- ☐ Chill extra water and freeze jugs and bottles.
- ☐ Charge battery fans and power banks.
- ☐ Identify your coolest room and ready it.
- ☐ Stock cool, no-cook foods and cold drinks.
- ☐ Plan where you'd go for air conditioning if needed.
- ☐ Check on anyone in your circle who's at risk in the heat.

✓ Pre-cool the house

If you know a hot outage may be coming, cool the house down with the air conditioning beforehand and close it up — it'll stay cooler longer once the power's gone.

Your printable staying-cool checklist

Everything for a hot outage, in one place to keep.

- ☐ A cool room identified — lowest floor, shaded, or basement.
- ☐ Blinds closed by day, windows opened in the cool of night.
- ☐ Plenty of water stored, and a habit of steady sipping.
- ☐ Battery fans charged, plus damp cloths and cooling towels.
- ☐ Cool, no-cook food and cold drinks on hand.
- ☐ The signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke known.
- ☐ A cool place to go if the house gets too hot.
- ☐ Extra attention for the elderly, infants, and unwell.

★ Want help with a hot-weather plan?

I'll help you plan to stay cool and safe in a summer outage, especially for anyone at risk. A first visit is a flat \$99. Call (330) 200-8042.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about summer outages.

Q: How do I stay cool without air conditioning?

Move to the coolest part of the house, close blinds by day and open windows at night, drink water steadily, wear loose clothing, and cool your body with damp cloths and a battery fan. Rest during the hottest hours.

Q: What are the signs of heat illness?

Heat exhaustion brings heavy sweating, cool clammy skin, weakness, dizziness, and nausea — move to the cool, rest, and sip water. Heat stroke brings hot skin, high temperature, confusion, or fainting, and is a 911 emergency: cool the person fast while help comes.

Q: Who is most at risk in a heat wave?

Older adults, infants and young children, people with chronic illnesses, and anyone on certain medicines. If that describes your household, take heat seriously, check on them often, and keep them in the coolest spot.

Q: Can I run my air conditioner on a generator?

An air conditioner is a big load with a large starting surge, so it takes serious, correctly sized backup power. A fan is far easier to run. Our power-options and generator guides cover what it takes for big loads like air conditioning.

Q: When should I leave for somewhere cool?

If your home is getting dangerously hot and you can't keep it safely cool — especially with older adults, infants, or anyone unwell — spend the hottest hours at a cooling center, library, store, or relative's home. Know your options ahead of time.

★ Let's beat the heat safely

Staying cool in a summer outage is mostly about planning ahead. Call or text (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you make a plan, especially for anyone in your home who's vulnerable to heat.

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 staying cool in a summer 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.

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

Stay Cool and Safe

Four steps for a hot outage



It's easier to stay cool than to cool back down.

Ways to Cool Down

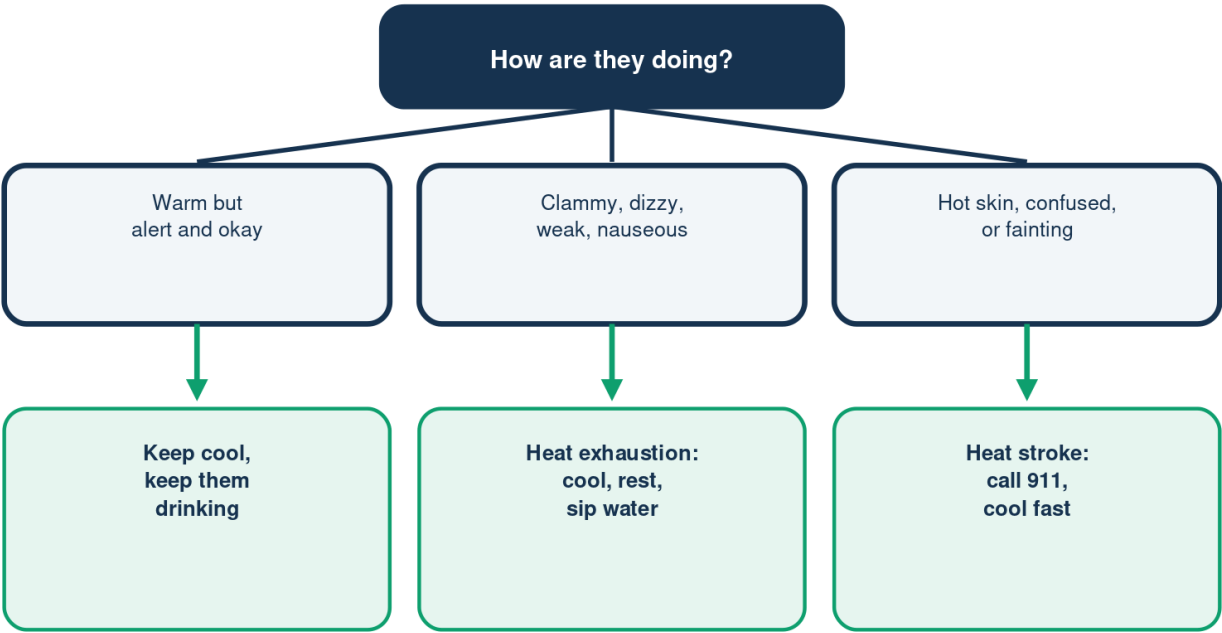
Layer a few for real relief

How it helps	
Shade and airflow	Blinds by day, air at night
Wet cloths, water	Cool the skin and pulse
Battery fans	Move the air
A cool place to go	When it's too hot to stay

Wet skin plus a breeze cools you like sweat does.

Is the Heat Getting to Someone?

Know when it's turned dangerous



Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency — don't wait.

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

Heat Exhaustion vs. Heat Stroke

Telling the two apart matters

	Heat exhaustion	Heat stroke
Skin	Cool, clammy, sweaty	Hot, red, dry or damp
Mind	Weak, dizzy	Confused, may faint
Do	Cool, rest, water	Call 911, cool fast

When in doubt, cool the person and call for help.



Need a Real Person?

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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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