BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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# Turn Off Listening & Delete Recordings

*Take real control of your Echo's microphone, camera, and saved recordings*

*Plain-English tech help from:*
Bill's Home Tech
*Portage County, Ohio*

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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**SUMMARY**

# The 60-Second Version

Your Echo listens only for its wake word, right on the device — it isn't recording the room. For guaranteed silence, press the mic button on top; a solid red ring means it's off. You can delete recordings by voice ("Alexa, delete what I just said"), delete them all in the Alexa app under Alexa Privacy, and set recordings to auto-delete or not save at all. You can also turn off human review of your voice. On an Echo Show, slide the camera shutter closed for certainty.

# 1 The Short Version

The uneasy feeling that a speaker is "always listening" is one of the most common reasons people hesitate about an Echo. The honest truth is reassuring, and you have real controls on top of it. Your Echo listens only for its wake word; you can switch the microphone off with a button; and you can review and delete every recording and tell it to stop saving new ones.

This guide walks through all of it in plain steps, so you can set the Echo to exactly the level of privacy you are comfortable with and stop worrying about it.

- The Echo only sends what you say after the wake word — not everything in the room.
- A button on top turns the microphone fully off whenever you want.
- You can listen to, and delete, your past recordings.
- You can tell Alexa to stop saving recordings going forward.

**WATCH OUT**

You do not have to choose between using the Echo and protecting your privacy. The settings in this guide let you keep the helpful parts while turning off the parts that make you uneasy.

## 2 How the Microphone Really Works

It helps to understand what is actually happening, because the reality is far less alarming than the worry. The Echo is always listening for just one thing: its wake word, usually "Alexa." That listening happens inside the device itself. Only once it hears the wake word does it start sending what you say to Amazon to answer you.

So the Echo is not recording your dinner conversation and shipping it off. It is waiting, locally, for its name — the way a dog ignores everything until it hears "walk." Everything in this guide builds extra control on top of that.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Occasionally the Echo mishears a word that sounds like "Alexa" and wakes by mistake. That is why the lights up when it is listening, and why being able to review and delete recordings is useful — you can catch and clear any of those.

## 3 The Microphone Off Button

The surest control is the simplest. Every Echo has a microphone button on top. Press it and the Echo physically stops listening — it cannot hear anything, not even its wake word — until you press it again.

1. Find the button with a microphone symbol (often crossed out) on top of the Echo.
2. Press it once. The light ring turns solid red.
3. While the ring is red, the Echo is not listening to anything.
4. Press it again to turn listening back on; the red light goes away.

> **TIP**
> Use the mic button for moments you want guaranteed privacy — a sensitive phone call, a private conversation, or just overnight. A solid red ring is your proof it is off.

# 4 Listen to Your Past Recordings

You can hear exactly what the Echo has saved — nothing is hidden from you. This is often reassuring in itself, because you see how little there is.

1. Open the Alexa app and go to More, then Settings.
2. Choose Alexa Privacy, then Review Voice History.
3. Pick a date range and listen to any clip you like.
4. You can delete individual clips right from this screen.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

You can also just ask the Echo: "Alexa, what did you hear?" or "Alexa, why did you do that?" after an odd moment, and it will tell you what it thought you said.

# 5 Delete Recordings by Voice

You do not even need the app to clear recordings — you can tell the Echo to do it out loud, which is handy in the moment.

- "Alexa, delete what I just said." — removes the last thing.
- "Alexa, delete everything I said today." — clears today's recordings.
- The Echo confirms out loud when it has done it.

**TIP**

Saying "Alexa, delete what I just said" is the quickest fix any time the Echo wakes up by mistake or hears something you would rather it did not keep.

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# 6 Delete All of Your Recordings

If you want a clean slate, you can delete your entire voice history at once from the app.

1. Open the Alexa app, go to Settings, then Alexa Privacy.
2. Choose Review Voice History.
3. Change the date range to All History.
4. Choose the option to delete all recordings and confirm.

**WATCH OUT**

Deleting recordings does not break anything — the Echo keeps working normally. It only removes the saved audio of past requests; it does not turn the device off or lose your reminders and lists.

# 7 Stop Saving Recordings Going Forward

Beyond clearing the past, you can tell Alexa not to keep recordings in the first place. This is the setting most people want once they know it exists.

1. In the Alexa app, go to Settings, then Alexa Privacy.
2. Open Manage Your Alexa Data.
3. Find the choice for how long to keep recordings and set it to "Don't save recordings."
4. You can also turn on auto-delete after 3 months if you prefer keeping them briefly.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

Choosing "don't save recordings" means the Echo answers you and then does not keep the audio. A few voice features that rely on remembering your voice may work a little less smoothly, but everyday use is unaffected.

# 8 Turn Off Helping to Improve Alexa

Separately, there is a setting about whether your recordings may be used to improve the service, which can include review by people. Many folks prefer to switch this off, and doing so is easy.

1. In the Alexa app, go to Settings, then Alexa Privacy.
2. Open Manage Your Alexa Data (or Manage How Your Data Improves Alexa).
3. Turn off the option to use your voice recordings to develop new features.
4. Turn off any related option about manual (human) review.

**TIP**

Turning these off does not reduce what the Echo can do for you day to day. It simply keeps your recordings from being used to train the service.

# 9 If You Have an Echo Show With a Camera

Echo Show models have a screen and a camera, which deserve their own moment of attention. They come with a physical shutter and controls so the camera is only ever on when you want it.

- Slide the built-in camera shutter closed to physically block the camera.
- A separate button mutes the microphone just like on other Echos.
- Camera-based features (like a video call) only use the camera when you start them.
- Drop In, by default, is audio only unless both sides turn on video.

**WATCH OUT**

The sliding shutter is the surest camera control — when it is closed, the camera physically cannot see, no matter what any setting says. Use it whenever you want certainty.

# 10 Set It and Forget It: Auto-Delete

If fiddling with settings is not for you, the single best "set once" choice is to turn on automatic deletion. After that, recordings clear themselves on a schedule and you never think about it again.

1. In the Alexa app, go to Settings, then Alexa Privacy, then Manage Your Alexa Data.
2. Choose to automatically delete recordings older than 3 months (or don't save them at all).
3. Save it — from now on it keeps itself tidy.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

Auto-delete is a nice middle ground: recent recordings stay briefly in case you want to check something, and everything older clears itself without any effort from you.

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# 11 A Short Privacy Checklist

If you want the quick version, here is a sensible privacy setup that most people are happy with. Do these once and you are in good shape.

- Press the mic button whenever you want guaranteed silence.
- Set recordings to auto-delete (or not save at all).
- Turn off using your recordings to improve Alexa and human review.
- On an Echo Show, keep the camera shutter closed when not in use.
- Know you can say "Alexa, delete what I just said" any time.

> *Privacy on an Echo is not all-or-nothing. A few minutes of settings lets you keep the helpful voice and quiet the worry.*

## 12 What the Lights on Your Echo Mean

The ring of light on your Echo quietly tells you what it is doing, and knowing the colors is reassuring — you can see at a glance whether it is listening, muted, or just thinking.

| Light | What it means |
|---|---|
| No light | Idle — waiting for the wake word, not sending anything |
| Solid red ring | Microphone is OFF — it cannot hear anything |
| Blue, spinning briefly | It heard the wake word and is listening to your request |
| Spinning green | A call or Drop In is active right now |
| Flashing yellow | You have a message or a reminder waiting |

**TIP**

The one to remember is the solid red ring: that is your proof the microphone is switched off. Any time you want certainty, press the mic button and look for red.

# 13 Set Up a Voice Profile — or Don't

Alexa can learn to recognize your voice so it greets you by name and tailors answers. It is handy, but it does mean storing a sample of your voice, so it is entirely your choice whether to use it.

- A voice profile lets Alexa know who is speaking and personalize replies.
- Setting one up stores a recording of your voice to recognize you.
- You can skip it entirely — the Echo works fine without one.
- You can delete your voice profile later in the Alexa app under your settings.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

If personalization does not matter to you, there is no need to create a voice profile at all. Fewer things stored is a perfectly reasonable preference, and the Echo loses none of its everyday usefulness.

# 14 Common Questions About Privacy

The questions I hear most often about Echo privacy, answered plainly and honestly.

- Is it recording all the time? No — it listens locally for the wake word and only sends what comes after it.
- Can I stop it saving anything? Yes — set recordings to "don't save" in Alexa Privacy.
- Do people listen to my recordings? Only if you leave that option on — you can turn it off.
- Does deleting recordings break the Echo? No — it keeps working exactly the same.
- Is the camera on an Echo Show watching me? Only during a call you start — and the shutter physically blocks it.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

If any of these still leave you uneasy, that unease is worth taking seriously. A device in your home should feel comfortable, and every one of these has a setting that puts you back in control.

# 15 When to Call Bill

Privacy settings can feel scattered across the app, and it is reasonable to want someone to simply set them the way you want and explain what each one does. That is a visit I am always happy to make.

I come to you, show you plainly what your Echo does and does not keep, set the recording and camera controls to your comfort level, and leave you knowing exactly how to turn the microphone off whenever you like. You should feel at ease with a device in your home — and with a few settings, you will.

- You want someone to set the privacy controls the way you prefer.
- The menus are confusing and you are not sure which setting is which.
- You have an Echo Show and want the camera handled with certainty.
- You would simply like it explained plainly and set up once.

CHEAT SHEET

# Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. A solid red ring means the microphone is off.

| I want to... | Do this... |
|---|---|
| Stop it listening now | Press the mic button on top — ring turns solid red |
| Delete the last thing | "Alexa, delete what I just said" |
| Delete today's recordings | "Alexa, delete everything I said today" |
| Delete everything | Alexa app Settings Alexa Privacy Review Voice History All History delete |
| Stop saving recordings | Alexa Privacy Manage Your Alexa Data Don't save recordings |
| Stop human review | Alexa Privacy turn off using recordings to improve Alexa |
| Get help | Call Bill: (330) 200-8042 |

**BEFORE YOU GO**

# 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 results.

HOW I CAN HELP

# Your Visit — and My Promise

*You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.*

**KEY SPECS**

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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