



An Extended Guide · No. 1799

Keeping Your Internet Up in an Outage

A small UPS on your modem and
router keeps you connected

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! Read this first — what a UPS can and can't do

First, the honest picture, so a UPS never disappoints you. A UPS — an uninterruptible power supply — is a battery backup box. When the power blinks or goes out, it keeps small electronics like your computer, your modem and router, or a medical monitor running without a flicker. But it is a short bridge, not a whole-home generator: it buys you minutes, not hours — time to save your work and shut down gently, keep the internet up through a brief blip, or ride you over until a generator or a portable power station takes over. Plug only small electronics into the battery side. Never plug in a laser printer, a space heater, a hair dryer, a microwave, a sump pump, or anything that makes heat or has a big motor — they draw far too much and can overload or damage the unit. A UPS has a sealed battery inside, so set it where a little warmth can escape, not sealed in a cabinet, and keep it dry. That battery wears out every few years and gets swapped and recycled at a battery drop-off — never put it in the household trash. Keeping the internet up is one of the very best jobs a UPS can do — your modem and router sip so little power that a modest unit carries them a good while.

Keeping your internet alive when the power blinks

When the lights flicker, your internet usually drops with them — and stays down for minutes while everything reboots. A small UPS on your modem and router makes that stop happening. For a lot of folks, it's the single most useful thing a UPS does.

I'm Bill, from Bill's Home Tech in Portage County, Ohio. Staying connected matters more every year — for looking things up, for an internet phone, for reaching family or help. This guide shows you how to keep it running through the blips.

The best news is how easy and inexpensive this is, because internet gear draws so little power. A little UPS goes a long way here.

★ The most-loved little upgrade

Of everything I help set up, a small UPS on the internet gear may be the one folks thank me for most. It quietly keeps you connected when you'd least expect to be. Call (330) 200-8042 and I'll help you pick one.

The whole idea, on one page

If you read nothing else, here's how to keep the internet up.

- ❑ Put your modem and router (and a fiber box, if you have one) on a UPS's battery outlets.
- ❑ Internet gear sips power, so even a modest UPS lasts a good while.
- ❑ That keeps Wi-Fi, an internet phone, and your connection alive through an outage.
- ❑ A UPS keeps YOUR gear on — but if your provider's equipment loses power, the internet can still drop.
- ❑ A little UPS dedicated just to the internet gear is a cheap, long-lasting gem.
- ❑ For long outages, recharge the UPS from a power station or generator.

✓ Small load, long life

Because the modem and router draw so little, this is the job where a UPS stretches furthest. It's the friendliest place to start.

Why the internet drops the second the power blinks

It surprises people that a quick flicker knocks them offline for minutes. Here's why.

Your internet comes into the house through a modem, and your Wi-Fi comes from a router (sometimes the two are one box). Both run on wall power. The instant the power blinks, they switch off — and when it comes back, they take a few minutes to restart and reconnect. So a one-second blink can mean several minutes with no internet.

✓ A blink costs you minutes

The outage may be a heartbeat, but the reboot is what really costs you. A UPS skips the reboot entirely by never letting the gear lose power.

What internet gear goes on the UPS

A short list — put all of it on the battery outlets.

- **Your modem** — the box where the internet enters the house.
- **Your router** — the box that makes your Wi-Fi (often combined with the modem).
- **A fiber box (ONT)**, if you have fiber internet — it needs power too.
- **The main node of a mesh Wi-Fi system** — see our mesh guide for the rest.
- **Any small network switch** your connection runs through.

If it's part of the chain that brings the internet to your devices, it belongs on the battery outlets. Leave the printer, the TV box, and chargers off — they don't keep you online.

The happy part: internet gear sips power

This is why keeping the internet up is such a bargain.

A modem and router together draw only a little power — far less than a computer or a monitor. That means even a modest UPS can keep them running for a comfortable stretch, and a UPS bought just for the internet gear can last a good long while on that light load. You get a lot of connected time for very little money.

✓ Light load, long runtime — see our sizing guide

Because the load is so small, runtime here is generous. Our sizing guide explains why the lighter the load, the longer the minutes.

Cable, DSL, and fiber — what still works

A UPS keeps your gear on, but your type of internet matters for what happens next.

Your internet	What to know in an outage
Cable	UPS your modem; the area equipment may still drop
DSL (phone line)	Often keeps working if the line has power
Fiber	Put the fiber box (ONT) on the UPS too
Cellular / 5G home	Put the receiver on the UPS; tower may vary

The honest point: a UPS guarantees your gear stays powered. Whether the internet itself keeps flowing also depends on your provider's equipment out in the neighborhood, which you can't control.

Finding your modem and router

Before you plug anything in, let's locate the boxes.

The modem is usually where the internet cable comes into the house — often near a TV outlet or where the line enters. The router may be the same box or a separate one nearby, and it's the one with the antennas or the Wi-Fi light. With fiber, there's also a small box on the wall (the ONT). Whatever the arrangement, they're plugged into the wall, and those are the plugs we'll move to the UPS.

★ Not sure which box is which?

Send me a photo of the boxes and their cords and I'll tell you exactly what's what — and which plugs to move to the UPS. That's an easy one to sort out by message.

Picking a small UPS for the internet

You don't need a big unit for this — you need the right little one.

Because the load is so light, a modest UPS is plenty. Look for a line-interactive model (it steadies shaky power too), pure sine wave if you want it gentle on the gear, and enough outlets for your modem, router, and fiber box. Our buying checklist walks through the whole shopping trip if you'd like the full list.

✓ There are tiny UPS units made just for this

Some small, quiet units are designed specifically to keep a modem and router alive — see our 'travel or mini UPS for your router' guide for those. They're perfect if the internet is all you want to back up.

Setting it up, step by step

No tools, no wiring — just moving a couple of plugs.

- ❑ Let the new UPS charge for a few hours first.
- ❑ Plug the UPS into the wall outlet the internet gear was using.
- ❑ Move the modem's plug into a battery-backup outlet.
- ❑ Move the router's (and fiber box's) plug into a battery outlet too.
- ❑ Leave everything else where it was, and switch the UPS on.
- ❑ Test it: with everyone's blessing, briefly unplug the UPS from the wall and check the internet stays up.

That's the whole job. If you'd rather I do it and confirm it works, it's a quick, friendly visit.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Keeping the internet up helps everyone, but it matters in different ways depending on where you live.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs, outages are usually short — so a UPS on the internet gear mostly saves you from the annoying reboot after every blink.

- Ride out the frequent short blips without losing your connection or your video call.
- Keep an internet-based phone working through the blinks.
- On cable internet, know that a longer neighborhood outage can still drop service even with your gear powered.
- A small dedicated UPS is inexpensive and lasts well on this light load.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country on a private well, staying connected can be a genuine safety matter — and outages run longer.

- Keep the modem, router, and phone base powered so you can call out the moment trouble starts.
- Size the internet UPS with roomy runtime, since rural outages last longer.
- Plan to recharge the UPS from a generator or power station in a long outage, so the internet holds.
- If your internet comes by cellular or fixed wireless, put the receiver on the UPS too.

★ Want to be sure you'll stay connected?

I'll help you pick the right little UPS, set it up, and test it so you know the internet holds when the power doesn't. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

Keeping Wi-Fi — and wired — alive

Once the gear is on a UPS, your whole connection rides along.

Your router is what hands out Wi-Fi and feeds any wired connections, so keeping it powered keeps both alive. Phones, tablets, laptops, a smart-home hub, an internet phone — all of them stay connected as long as the modem and router keep running. One little UPS protects the whole web of them at once.

✓ One UPS, the whole household online

You don't need a UPS on every device — just on the gear that makes the internet. Protect the source and everything downstream stays connected.

If your home phone runs through the internet

This is a big reason to keep the internet up — and it catches people off guard.

Many home phones today run through the internet (often called VoIP) rather than an old-fashioned phone line. If that's you, then when the power fails and the modem and router go dark, your home phone goes dead too — right when you might need it. A UPS on the internet gear keeps that phone working.

★ Don't let an outage cut your phone

If you rely on a home phone for emergencies, please make sure the internet gear behind it is on a UPS. Our 'keep your home phone working' guide covers this in full — it's an important one.

What a UPS can't fix

An honest limit, so you know what to expect.

A UPS keeps your modem and router powered, but it can't power your internet provider's equipment out in the neighborhood. In a widespread outage, that equipment may lose power too — and then the internet drops no matter what you do at home. This is more common with cable than with some other types.

! Your gear on, the service maybe not

Keeping your own gear powered is the part you control, and it handles the great majority of short outages. Just know that a long, wide outage can take the whole service down — that's on the provider, not your UPS.

Why a dedicated internet UPS shines

Giving the internet gear its own little UPS is one of my favorite setups.

When a small UPS carries only the modem and router, that light load stretches the runtime far longer than if it were sharing with a hungry computer. It's inexpensive, it tucks away neatly, and it keeps you connected long after a shared unit would have given out. If staying online is your goal, dedicate a unit to it.

✓ Separate jobs, longer life

Let the computer have its own UPS and the internet gear have its own. Each lasts longer, and losing one doesn't take the other down.

How long will it keep me online?

Longer than you'd guess — though not forever.

On such a light load, a UPS keeps internet gear going for a good stretch — long enough to sail through the usual short outages and to stay reachable well into a longer one. I won't quote you minutes, because it depends on your gear and the unit, but this is the job where a UPS lasts furthest. For a truly long outage, recharge it from a generator or power station.

✓ Stretch it further

Our 'extending runtime' guide has simple ways to add hours — from bigger batteries to a power station that keeps the little UPS topped up.

A note on mesh Wi-Fi systems

If your Wi-Fi comes from several matching units around the house, you have a mesh.

With a mesh system, the main unit (the one wired to your modem) is the one that must stay powered to keep you online — so it goes on the UPS with the modem. The satellite units around the house extend the signal, and you can decide which of those are worth keeping alive too. Our mesh guide walks through the whole plan.

★ Start with the main node

If nothing else, keep the modem and the main mesh unit on a UPS. That's what holds your connection; the satellites are about coverage.

Common mistakes

The slip-ups that leave folks offline anyway.

- **Forgetting the fiber box** — powering the router but not the ONT, so the internet still drops.
- **Using a surge-only outlet** for the modem, so it dies in an outage.
- **Sharing with a hungry PC**, so the internet dies as fast as the computer.
- **Expecting the service to survive a wide outage** the provider's own equipment can't ride out.

! Power every box in the chain

The internet only stays up if every box between the wall and your Wi-Fi keeps running. Miss one — often the fiber box — and the whole chain drops.

Common Questions

The internet-backup questions I hear most.

Q: Will a UPS really keep my internet on?

It keeps your modem and router powered, which handles the short outages that would otherwise knock you offline. If your provider's neighborhood equipment also loses power in a big outage, the service itself may still drop.

Q: What exactly do I put on it?

The modem, the router, and — if you have fiber — the fiber box (ONT), plus any small network switch or the main mesh unit. All on the battery-backup outlets.

Q: How long will it keep me online?

A good while, because internet gear draws so little. It sails through typical short outages; for a long one, recharge the UPS from a generator or power station.

Q: Do I need a big UPS for this?

No — the load is light, so a modest unit is plenty. There are even tiny UPS units made just for a modem and router; see our mini-UPS guide.

Q: My home phone runs through the internet — does this help?

Yes, and it's important. Keeping the modem and router on a UPS keeps an internet phone working in an outage. See our 'keep your home phone working' guide.

★ Want to be sure you'll stay connected?

I'll help you pick, set up, and test an internet UPS so you know it holds. Call or text (330) 200-8042 — happy to help.

The internet-backup checklist

Everything from this guide, in one list.

- ☐ Identify every box in the chain: modem, router, fiber box, main mesh unit.
- ☐ Put all of them on the UPS's battery outlets.
- ☐ Choose a modest line-interactive UPS — the load is light.
- ☐ Test it by briefly unplugging the UPS from the wall.
- ☐ Plan to recharge it from a power station or generator in a long outage.
- ☐ If you have an internet phone, confirm it stays working too.

✓ Test once, trust it

A single test — unplug the UPS and watch the internet stay up — turns hope into confidence. Do it once and you'll rest easy.

If you're still offline in an outage

A quick checklist for when the UPS is on but the internet isn't.

- Check that every box in the chain is truly on the battery outlets, not surge-only.
- Look for a forgotten box — often the fiber ONT — still on wall power.
- See whether the UPS is beeping an overload; lighten the load if so.
- Consider whether the outage is wide enough that the provider's equipment is down.

★ Still stuck? I'll help you trace it

If the internet won't come up on the UPS, we can walk the chain together over the phone and find the weak link. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

Where to go next

You've got the internet covered — here's what pairs with this guide.

- Several Wi-Fi units around the house? See 'keeping a Wi-Fi mesh alive.'
- Home phone through the internet? See 'keep your home phone working.'
- Want a tiny unit just for this? See 'a travel or mini UPS for your router.'
- Long outages? See 'extending runtime' and 'UPS vs power station.'

Follow whatever question is on your mind. Each guide stands on its own.

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 keeping your internet up during 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.

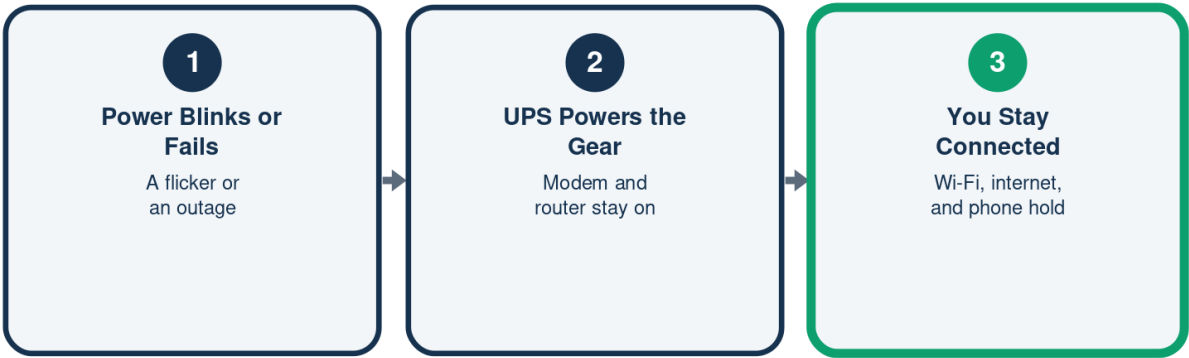
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. Setting up a plug-in UPS is friendly, everyday work I'm glad to do with you; I don't do licensed electrical work myself, so for a hardwired unit or any panel or wiring work I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro.

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How a UPS Keeps You Online

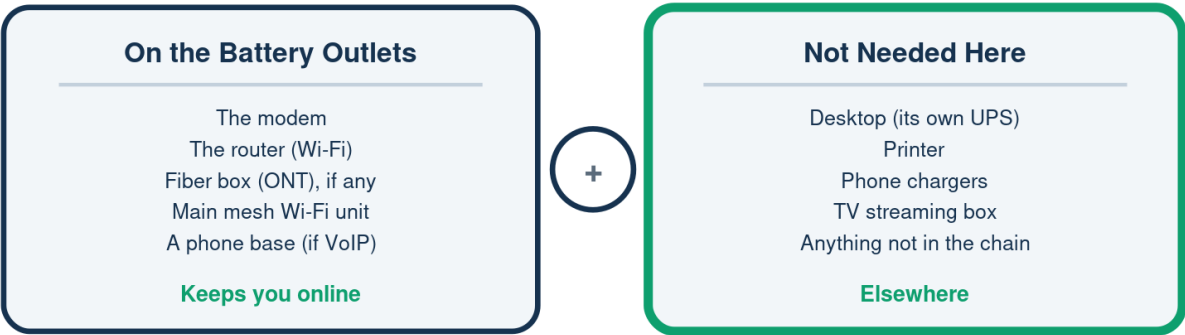
No reboot, no lost connection



Works as long as your provider's equipment still has power, too.

What to Put on the Internet UPS

Power every box in the chain

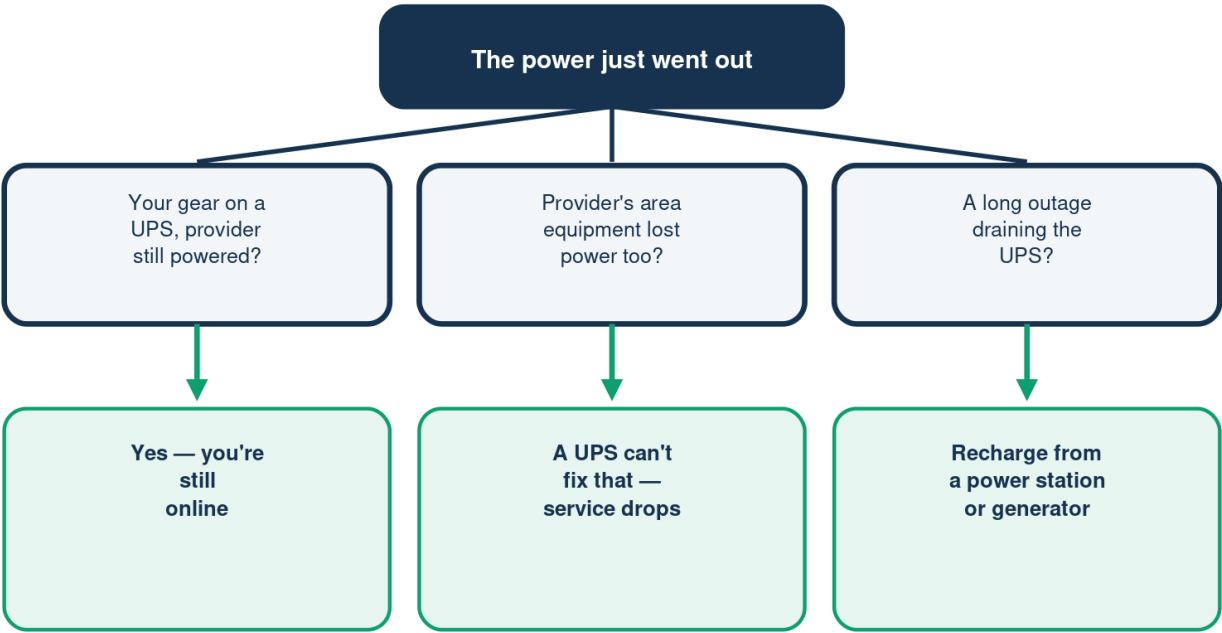


A small UPS just for internet gear lasts a good while.

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

Will Your Internet Stay Up?

A starting point, not the final word



Power every box in the chain — a forgotten fiber box drops it all.

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

Internet Types in an Outage

What to know for each

What to know	
Cable	Area equipment may drop
DSL (phone line)	Often keeps working
Fiber	Put the ONT on the UPS
Cellular / 5G home	UPS the receiver

A UPS powers your gear; the service also depends on the provider.



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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

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— *Bill*



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