



An Extended Guide · No. 1692

When the Power Goes, So Does Your Water

What every well-water home
should understand first

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

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! Read this first — on a well, no power means no water

On a home with a private well, a power outage isn't just dark — it's dry. The pump that lifts your water runs on your home's electricity, so when the power stops, every tap, toilet, and hose stops with it. Keep a few days of stored drinking water on hand as a backup you can count on — a common guideline is about a gallon per person per day. And know this from the start: a well pump is almost always a 240-volt appliance wired straight into your electrical panel, so any backup hookup for it is a licensed electrician's job. Never try to feed it with a cord or by backfeeding an outlet — that is unsafe, against code, and can put deadly voltage on the power lines outside. That is exactly why this guide comes first — before you compare a single generator or battery, it helps to understand why your water leans on your power, and what a calm, simple plan looks like.

Start here — water and power are tied together

For a home on a private well, a power outage is more than dark rooms and a quiet house — it is a house with no running water. This guide is the place to begin: it explains why, what is at stake, and how a simple plan comes together, one calm step at a time.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. A great many of the homes I visit are out on their own well, and this is the very first thing worth understanding out here — long before you start comparing generators or batteries. Get this part right, and everything else in this category makes sense.

There is no rush and no pressure. This guide does not try to sell you the biggest machine or teach you every detail at once. It lays out the big picture in plain English, then points you, by name, to the other guides that go deeper on each piece.

★ Rather just talk it through?

There is no silly question, and a phone call costs you nothing. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we can talk through your well, your home, and where to start — no obligation, no sales pitch.

The whole guide, in about a minute

If you remember only these things, you are already most of the way to a calm, workable plan.

- ❑ On a private well, no power means no water at all — not low pressure, none.
- ❑ Your well pump is an electric appliance, usually 240 volts, wired straight into your panel — there is no plug.
- ❑ A good plan has three layers: stored water, a safe way to run the pump, and ways to conserve.
- ❑ Start with stored water — it is the simplest, cheapest step, and it helps no matter what.
- ❑ You cannot just plug a well pump in — powering it safely is a licensed electrician's job.
- ❑ Do not wait for an outage to sort this out — a calm afternoon is the time to make a plan.

✓ You are already ahead

If you take only these six things from the whole guide, you are ahead of most folks. The rest simply fills them in, one gentle page at a time — read as much or as little as you like.

City water vs. a private well — the key difference

The whole reason this guide exists comes down to one difference in where your water comes from.

City water is pushed to your tap by the utility, whether your own power is on or off. Even in a neighborhood-wide blackout, the water usually keeps flowing, because it does not depend on your home's electricity at all.

A private well has no such backup built in. The pump that lifts water out of the ground and into your house runs on your home's electricity, full stop. When that power stops, so does every tap, every toilet refill, and every hose in the yard.

✓ The one sentence to remember

On a well, no power means no water. Everything else in this guide grows from that single, simple fact — so it is worth holding onto.

Everything that stops when the water stops

It reaches further than most people expect the first time it happens. A household leans on water dozens of times a day without noticing.

- **Drinking and cooking** — the most important, and the first thing you notice.
- **Flushing toilets** — once the pressure tank empties, the toilets stop refilling.
- **Cleaning and dishes** — washing up, wiping counters, and mopping all need water.
- **Hygiene** — handwashing, bathing, and brushing teeth all pause.
- **Animals and livestock** — pets, chickens, horses, and cattle still need water every day.
- **The garden** — and any greenhouse or outdoor watering that leans on the well.

For some households there is even more at stake than comfort — water matters for medicine, for hydration, and for anyone with a health need. We keep that in mind gently on a later page, and our guide on water for medical and senior needs goes deeper.

✓ It adds up faster than you think

Make a quick mental list of every way your home used water yesterday. That list is exactly what a good plan is quietly protecting.

Why outages out here often last longer

Country homes tend to be at the end of the line — and that has a real effect on how long the power stays off.

When a storm knocks out power, crews generally work to restore the largest number of homes first. Dense in-town neighborhoods often come back before the scattered houses at the end of long rural lines. So an outage that is a few hours in town can stretch into a day or more out in the country.

That longer window is exactly why water planning matters more out here. An in-town home might ride out a short outage with a few bottles of water and a shrug. A well home may need to plan for a longer stretch with no tap at all — which is very doable, once you have thought it through ahead of time.

! Plan for days, not hours

When you think through your water plan, aim it at a longer outage from the start. Plan for days and a short outage becomes easy — plan only for hours and a long one catches you out.

Your pressure tank buys a little time — a little

There is a small cushion built into your system already. It is worth understanding, and worth not overestimating.

A pressure tank stores a small reserve of water under pressure, which is why your pump cycles on for a bit and then rests, rather than running every second a tap is open. When the power goes out, that reserve is what still comes out of the faucet — for a short while.

But it is a small cushion, measured in a bit of water, not days of supply. Once it is used up, the taps go dry until the pump can run again. Our pressure-tank guide explains how to make the most of that reserve, including filling the tank fully when you see an outage coming, so I will not repeat all of it here.

✓ A head start, not a solution

Do not mistake that first bit of water for a real supply. It buys you a little time to start your plan — nothing more. That is why the layers on the next page matter.

The three layers of a good water plan

A solid plan is not one big purchase. It is three simple layers that back each other up.

- **Layer 1 — Stored water.** A few days of water set aside now, ready before any outage. Simple and cheap. See our storing-water guide.
- **Layer 2 — A way to run the pump.** A generator or battery, connected safely, to bring your full water back. See our sizing guide and our guide on connecting backup power.
- **Layer 3 — Conserve and manual backups.** Stretching what you have, plus last resorts. See our guides on conserving water and on hand-pump and manual backup.

You do not have to build all three at once. Most folks start with the first layer today and add the others over time as budget and comfort allow. Each layer makes the others stronger, and each one stands on its own.

★ Not sure which layer to start with?

Start with stored water — it is the easiest, and it helps no matter what else you decide. If you would like a second opinion on the rest, call me at (330) 200-8042.

Why you cannot just plug the pump in

This surprises a lot of people, so it is worth saying plainly and early.

A well pump is not like a lamp or a fridge. It is almost always a 240-volt appliance, wired straight into your electrical panel on its own dedicated circuit — there is no plug to find and no outlet to reach. (Some small shallow-well pumps run on 120 volts, but they are usually hardwired too.)

That means you cannot feed it with an extension cord, and you must never try to power it by backfeeding an outlet or using a so-called 'suicide cord.' The safe way is a transfer switch or an interlock at your panel, installed by a licensed electrician. Our guide on connecting backup power covers exactly how that works, and our guide on what it really takes walks through the whole picture.

! Never a cord, never a backfeed

This is the one hard safety line in this guide. Backfeeding can put deadly voltage on the power lines outside and can injure or kill a lineman working to restore your power. It is unsafe, against code, and never worth it. Powering a well pump is licensed-electrician territory, every single time.

The reassuring truth

If all of this feels like a lot, take a breath — because here is the good news.

Every bit of this is solvable. None of it requires guessing, spending a fortune, or becoming an expert. It just takes a calm, written plan built one layer at a time — and folks out here have been keeping the water flowing through outages for generations.

You do not have to hold it all in your head, either. The rest of this category breaks each piece into its own short guide, and I am always a phone call away if you would rather talk it through than read it all on your own.

★ This is very doable — and I like doing it

Helping well-water families make a calm plan is one of my favorite parts of this work. Whenever you would like a hand, call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

This guide is written for well-water homes, but it is worth being clear about who needs it and who does not.

If you live in town or the suburbs

If your water comes from the city or a municipal system, a power outage does not touch your water at all — it keeps flowing at the tap whether your power is on or off. This particular worry simply is not yours, and your backup planning can focus on the fridge, the furnace, lights, and comfort instead.

- An outage will not cut your water, so you can plan around comfort and food, not going without.
- Our guide on choosing a generator and our sizing guide are the better starting points for you.
- You will not have a large 240-volt pump surge to plan around, so a smaller setup often does the job.
- A few bottles of stored water on hand are still good sense for any home — but you are not depending on them.

If you are out in the country on a well

If your water comes from a private well, this is your anchor guide — the one to read first and come back to. Everything else in this category builds on what is here.

- No power means no water, so your plan has to cover water, not just lights and the fridge.
- Rural outages often run longer, which raises the stakes and rewards a fuller plan.
- Start with the three layers from the earlier page, and add each piece over time.
- Some older or larger suburban lots have a private well too — if you are unsure, check a water bill or ask a neighbor.

★ Not sure which one you are?

If you have never checked, a quick look at a water bill settles it — a bill from a water utility means city water, and no water bill usually means a well. Call me at (330) 200-8042 if you would like help figuring it out.

First step — just store some water

If you do one thing after reading this guide, make it this. It is the simplest, cheapest, and most reliable layer of all.

Stored water asks nothing of you during an outage — no fuel, no wiring, no starting anything. It is simply there when you turn to it. A common emergency-preparedness guideline is about a gallon per person per day for several days, for drinking and cooking, plus extra for flushing, cleaning, and any animals.

You do not need anything fancy. Clean, sealed containers, kept out of direct sunlight and rotated now and then, do the job. Our storing-water guide covers how much to keep, what containers to use, and how to keep it fresh, so I will not repeat all of that here.

✓ You can start today, for very little

Fill a few clean containers this week and you have already built the first layer of your plan — no visit, no purchase, and no waiting for a storm in the forecast.

Second — decide how you will power the pump

This is the bigger layer, and there are a few honest paths. Here is the shape of them, with a guide for each.

- **A portable generator** — the most common choice out here, if it has 240-volt output and enough surge. See our guide on running a well pump with a portable generator.
- **A standby generator** — a permanent unit that starts itself, wired in by a pro. See our standby-generator guide.
- **A power station or battery** — quiet and simple, but with real limits for a well pump, often not enough on its own. See our guide on power stations and batteries.
- **A whole-home battery** — a bigger investment with an honest picture worth understanding. See our whole-home battery guide.

Whichever path fits your home and budget, two things stay true: the pump must be connected safely by a licensed electrician, and the setup has to handle the pump's big starting surge. I do not sell any of these, so my advice is just honest advice — our sizing guide and our guide on what it really takes go deeper on the how.

! If you go the generator route, run it outdoors only

A running generator's exhaust carries carbon monoxide, an invisible gas that can kill in minutes. Never run one indoors, in a garage, in a shed, or on a porch — outside only, well away from windows and doors. Our generator guides cover this in full.

Third — test it, then write it down

A plan you have never tried is really just a hope. A calm afternoon turns it into a plan you can trust.

Once you have a way to power the pump, try the whole thing on an ordinary day — start the generator or battery, have your electrician show you how the transfer switch or interlock works, and watch water come back at the tap. Far better to meet any surprise now than in the middle of a storm. Our guide on testing your setup walks through it step by step.

Then write it down. A simple page — who does what, where the supplies are, how to start things — taped inside a cabinet door means anyone in the house can follow it, even on a day you are not home.

★ I am glad to be there for the first test

If you would like company for that first test run, or just reassurance that everything is working the way it should, call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we will walk through it together.

A simple family water plan

The best plan is one the whole household can follow — not one that lives only in your head.

Write a short, plain note and tape it inside a kitchen or bathroom cabinet. It does not need to be fancy — it needs to be findable. Here is what a good one covers:

- ☐ Where the stored water is kept, and roughly how much there is.
- ☐ Who fills the bathtub and jugs when an outage is on the way.
- ☐ How to start the generator or battery, in simple steps — or who to call for that.
- ☐ How to save water for flushing, and where the buckets are.
- ☐ Who to phone for help — the well company, the electrician, and my number.

✓ Keep a copy with your home papers

A second copy alongside your generator's manual and warranty means the plan is there when you need it, even if the cabinet note has wandered off.

A few common myths, gently corrected

These come up often, and believing them can leave a family caught short. Here is the honest version of each.

The myth	The honest truth
My pressure tank will last for days.	It holds a small reserve — think a bit of water, not days.
I can just run a cord to the pump.	It is 240 volts and hardwired — a cord cannot and must not feed it.
A little battery box will run it.	Most cannot start a 240-volt pump at all — verify before you rely on one.
Outages never last long around here.	Rural lines are often restored last — plan for a longer stretch.

! When in doubt, do not guess

Every one of these myths tends to end the same way: a dry house at the worst possible moment. Plan for the honest version, and you will not be the one caught out.

What I can do — and what I bring in a pro for

I want to be plain about my role, because honesty is the whole point of these guides.

- **What I do:** help you understand your setup, plan the layers, size things sensibly, line up the right pros, and be there for the first test — all at your pace, no rushing.
- **A licensed electrician does** the panel work — the transfer switch or interlock, and anything 240-volt. That is their trade, and it usually needs a permit and inspection.
- **A well or pump professional does** the pump, the pressure tank, and the plumbing — and can tell you your pump's real numbers.

I am a tech helper with 30-plus years of patient experience, not a licensed electrician, plumber, or well contractor — and I will never pretend otherwise. What I am is the person who helps you make sense of it all and coordinates the folks who do the licensed work. Our guide on choosing the right pros goes deeper on that.

★ One friendly point of contact

Think of me as the person in your corner who helps you ask the right questions and lines up the right pros. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

The mistakes that catch people out

Most well-water regret comes down to a handful of avoidable slip-ups. Here they are, at a glance.

- **No stored water** — leaning on a generator as the only layer, with nothing underneath it.
- **Guessing the pump's numbers** instead of checking the nameplate or asking the well company.
- **Assuming a cord or a small battery will do it** — when a well pump needs far more.
- **Never testing the setup** until the day of a real outage, when there is no room for surprises.
- **Forgetting the rest of the household** — animals, medical needs, and anyone who cannot haul jugs.

Our common-mistakes guide covers each of these in detail. The good news is that every one is easy to avoid once you know it is coming — this page is just the overview.

✓ The biggest one is the simplest to fix

The most common regret of all is having no stored water. A few containers filled this week removes it entirely — that is the whole fix.

Questions worth asking — yourself and your well company

A few good questions now save a great deal of worry later.

Q: Do I know where my water comes from — a well or the city?

If you are not certain, check a water bill or ask a neighbor. It decides whether this guide is really for you.

Q: Do I have any water stored right now?

If not, that is the first and easiest thing to fix — see our storing-water guide, and start with what you have on hand.

Q: What is my well pump, and can my well company tell me its details?

The company that drilled or services your well can usually give you the pump's numbers from their records — no guessing required.

Q: How long can my pressure tank supply water without the pump?

Ask your well company for a rough sense, so you know how much of a head start that small reserve really gives you.

✓ Write the answers down

Keep the answers with your other home papers. Future-you, in the middle of an outage, will be very glad you did.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from well-water families, answered plainly.

Q: If the power goes out, will I have any water at all?

For a short while, yes — your pressure tank holds a small reserve. Once that is used up, the taps go dry until the pump can run again.

Q: Can I just run an extension cord to my well pump?

No. It is a 240-volt, hardwired appliance with no plug. It needs a transfer switch or interlock, installed by a licensed electrician.

Q: What is the very first thing I should do?

Store some water. It is cheap, simple, and helps no matter what else you decide — see our storing-water guide.

Q: Do I need to buy a big, expensive generator right away?

Not at all. Start with stored water, then add a way to power the pump when you are ready. A plan built in layers is one you can afford.

★ Still have a question? That is what I am here for

There is no silly question. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we will talk it through together, with no obligation.

A gentle word about cost

I know a well-water plan can sound expensive. It does not have to start that way.

You do not have to build the biggest system all at once. The first layer — stored water — costs very little and helps right away. From there, you add pieces as your budget allows, and each one stands on its own and earns its keep.

I do not sell generators, pumps, or batteries, and I earn nothing on what you buy — so my advice is just honest advice about what actually fits your home. When a job needs a licensed electrician or a well professional, I will line you up with a trustworthy local one rather than guess at a cost.

★ Start where you are

Even the smallest step — a few jugs of water set aside — is a real start. Build from there at your own pace. My first visit is a flat \$99, with a 30-day come-back-free guarantee, but plenty of what is here you can begin on your own, for nothing.

Bringing it all together — your next three steps

If this guide did its job, the path ahead feels calm and clear. Here is where to go next.

- ❑ **Today:** store a few days of water — the simplest layer. See our storing-water guide.
- ❑ **Soon:** find out your pump's details and how you might power it — our sizing guide and our guide on connecting backup power help.
- ❑ **Before the next storm:** test your plan and write it on a note taped inside a cabinet.

Take them one at a time. There is no prize for rushing, and every step you take makes the next outage a little less worrying than the last one.

★ And whenever you would like a hand

That is exactly what I do — come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

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 planning for water when the power goes out 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

City Water vs. a Private Well in an Outage

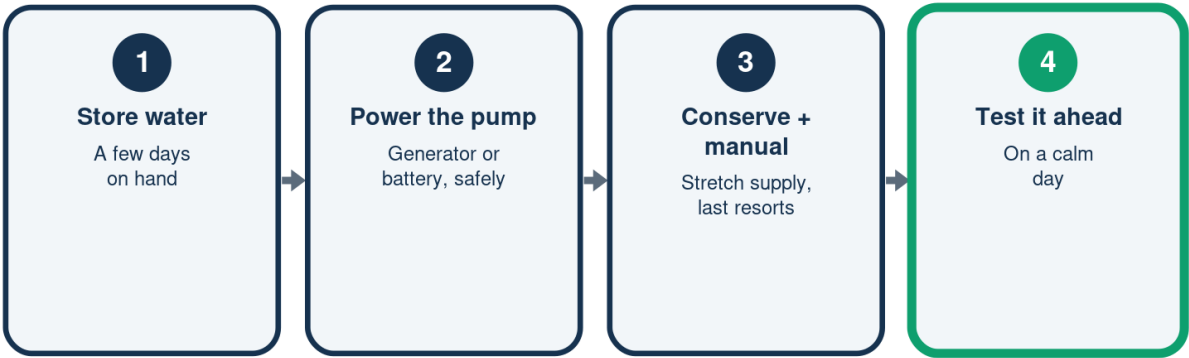
Why only one of them keeps flowing

	City water	Private well
Water pressure	Keeps flowing	Stops at once
Runs on	Utility power	Your power
Backup needed?	Rarely	Yes
Outages	Often shorter	Often longer

On a well, no power means no water -- plan for it.

Building Your Water Plan

The calm way to get ready



Layer these and an outage stays manageable.

Three Layers of a Well-Water Plan

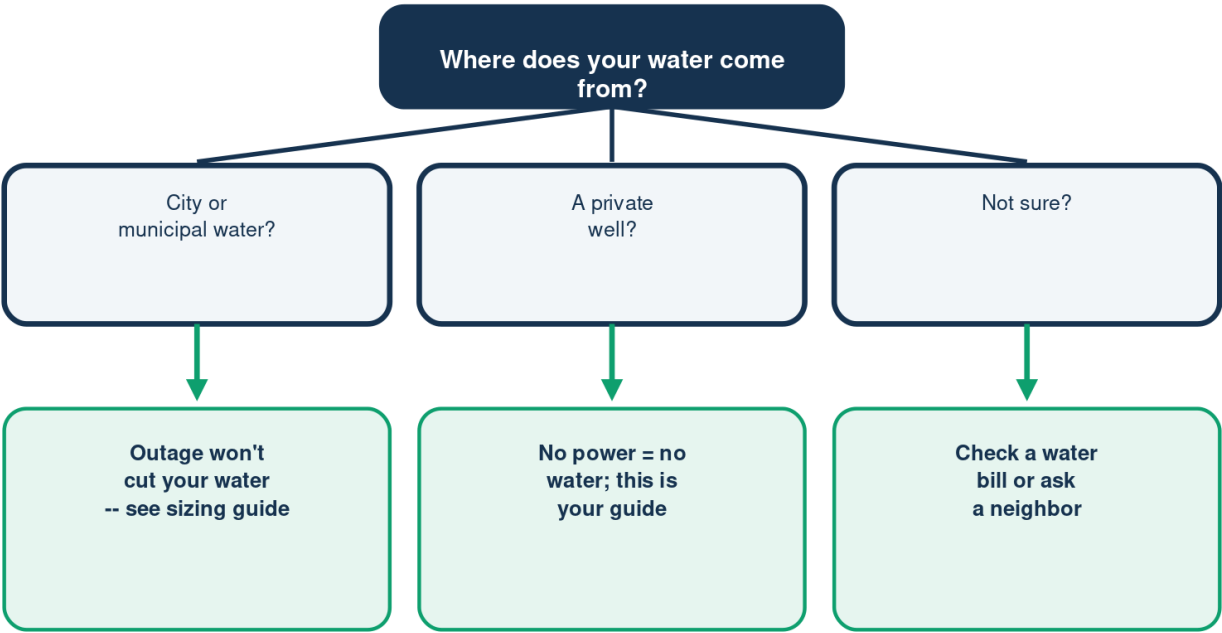
Each one backs up the others

Layer			What it does
Stored water	Bridges any gap	No power needed	
Run the pump	Full water back	Needs a hookup	
Conserve/manual	Stretches supply	A last resort	

Start with stored water -- it's the simplest layer.

Does This Guide Apply to You?

Where your water comes from decides



Some older or larger suburban lots have a private well too.

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



Need a Real Person?

You do not have to remember all of it.
You just have to remember you can call.
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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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