



An Extended Guide · No. 1704

Your Well-Pump Outage Game Plan

Exactly what to do
when the power goes out

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! Read this first — carbon monoxide is the real danger

A running generator's exhaust contains carbon monoxide — an invisible, odorless gas that can kill in minutes. Never run a generator indoors, in a garage, in a shed, or on a porch, not even with the door open and a fan going. Run it outside only, well away from the house — the safety agencies say at least 20 feet — with the exhaust pointed away from every window, door, and vent. Put battery-backup carbon-monoxide alarms on each floor and outside the bedrooms. If an alarm sounds, or anyone feels dizzy, sick, or sleepy, get everyone into fresh air first and ask questions later. Your game plan runs on a generator, so the very first rule of the plan is where you put it: outdoors, well away from the house, every single time. Everything else is easy by comparison.

Your well-pump outage game plan

When the power goes out on a well home, a calm, practiced plan turns a scramble into a routine. This guide is that plan, step by step, from the first dark minute to the moment the lights come back.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. The families who sail through outages are not the ones with the fanciest gear — they are the ones who know what to do, in order, without having to think too hard. That is what a game plan gives you.

This guide assumes you have a generator and a safe hookup already. If you do not yet, our guides on choosing a generator and connecting it safely come first. Here, we focus on the doing — calmly and in the right order.

★ Let's build your plan together

The best plan is one written for your home. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we will tailor these steps to your setup, then practice them once on a calm day.

The whole plan, in about a minute

If you remember only these things, you have the shape of a calm outage.

- ❑ First, stay calm and capture water — your pressure tank holds only a small reserve.
- ❑ Fill jugs and the bathtub while that reserve lasts, for flushing and washing.
- ❑ Set the generator outdoors, well away from the house, and start it — carbon monoxide is the real danger.
- ❑ Switch over at the panel through your transfer switch or interlock — never a backfeed.
- ❑ Run the pump in sessions to refill your water, then rest the generator to save fuel.
- ❑ When power returns and holds, switch back to the grid and shut the generator down.

✓ Calm and in order

There is no prize for rushing. Capture water first, then power, then settle into a rhythm. A written copy of these steps taped inside a cabinet lets anyone follow along.

The first five minutes

What you do right away sets the tone. None of it is hard — it just helps to know the order.

- **Confirm it is a real outage** — check a breaker or a neighbor, so you are not starting a generator for a tripped breaker.
- **Note the time** — it helps you gauge how long you have been out and plan your water.
- **Capture water now** — while the pressure tank's reserve lasts, fill jugs and the bathtub (more on the next page).
- **Check on anyone who needs it** — a family member on medical equipment, or a neighbor who lives alone.
- **Find your flashlights** — before you head out to the generator in the dark.

Notice that starting the generator is not step one. Capturing water while you still have pressure comes first, because that little reserve does not last — and it is free insurance while you get the generator going.

✓ Water first, then the generator

The pressure tank's reserve is a gift with a short shelf life. Spend the first few minutes filling containers, then turn to the generator with your water already secured.

Capture water while you still have pressure

This is the step folks most often skip and most often regret. It takes minutes and pays off for hours.

The moment the power goes out, your pressure tank still holds a small reserve of water under pressure. That reserve will flow from your taps for a little while — and then it is gone until the pump runs again. So use it deliberately: fill drinking containers, then fill the bathtub and some buckets for flushing and washing.

A bathtub full of water is a wonderful thing in an outage — a bucketful poured into the toilet bowl flushes it, and the rest handles hand-washing and cleaning. If you saw the storm coming and filled up ahead of time, even better. Our guides on storing water and the pressure tank go deeper.

✓ The bathtub trick

Fill the tub early. You are not bathing in it — you are keeping a big reserve for flushing and washing. A clean tub or a tub liner keeps it tidy.

Getting the generator going — safely

Now for the power. The order here keeps you safe and keeps the start smooth.

- ❑ Carry the generator outside, well away from the house — the safety agencies say at least 20 feet — exhaust pointed away from windows and doors.
- ❑ Check the oil and fuel before starting, in daylight if you can.
- ❑ Start the generator and let it settle for a moment before you put a load on it.
- ❑ Connect it to your outdoor inlet box with the proper cord.
- ❑ At the panel, switch over through your transfer switch or interlock.

Never, ever run the generator in a garage, shed, basement, or on a porch — not even with the door open. And never backfeed an outlet. These two rules are the whole safety of the plan, and our guides on carbon monoxide and connecting backup power cover them fully.

! Outdoors only, and never a backfeed

Carbon monoxide from a generator can kill in minutes, and backfeeding can kill a lineman. Place it far outside and switch over through a proper switch. No exceptions, ever.

Bringing your water back

With the generator running and the switch thrown, it is time to wake the pump. A little care here avoids a nuisance trip.

Give the pump a clear runway: turn off big loads like the range, dryer, or water heater, then switch on the pump circuit. Let the pump start and refill your pressure tank and pipes. You will hear the generator work harder for a moment at the startup surge, then settle as the pump runs.

Once the water is back and the tank is refilled, you can switch other essentials back on within your generator's limits — the fridge, the furnace, some lights. Starting the pump first, alone, is the simplest way to avoid overloading a right-sized portable.

✓ Give the pump a clear runway

Big loads off, pump on, let it refill, then bring other things back. That small sequence keeps a right-sized generator from tripping at the pump's startup.

Run in sessions — the fuel-saving rhythm

Here is the trick that makes a tank of fuel go a long way on a well home.

You do not have to run the generator around the clock. Because your pressure tank holds a reserve, you can run the generator for a stretch — long enough to refill the tank, top up your stored containers, cool the fridge, and run anything else you need — then shut it down and rest. When the water gets low again, you run another session.

This session rhythm stretches your fuel, gives you quiet, and is kinder to your neighbors. Many well-water families settle into a pattern of a few sessions a day and find it works beautifully. In deep winter, you may run longer to keep the heat on — adjust to your needs.

✓ A few sessions a day

Run the generator to refill water and cool the fridge, then rest it. This one habit can make a tank of fuel last far longer than running nonstop.

Refueling safely

Fuel and a hot engine need a little respect. This part is simple if you never rush it.

When it is time to add fuel, turn the generator off and let it cool first. Gasoline spilled on a hot engine can catch fire, so a few minutes' patience matters. Refuel outdoors, away from any flame, and wipe up spills before restarting. Store fuel safely, in approved containers, away from living space.

If you run propane or a dual-fuel unit, swapping a tank is cleaner and there is no spill risk — one reason many rural folks like propane. Either way, keep enough fuel on hand for the kind of long outage the country tends to get. Our fuel-storage guidance in the generator guides covers safe storage.

! Cool it before you fuel it

Never pour gasoline into a running or hot generator. Shut it off, let it cool a few minutes, then refuel outdoors and away from any flame or spark.

Settling in for a longer outage

If the outage stretches into a day or more — as rural ones can — a steady rhythm keeps everyone comfortable.

- **Keep the fridge and freezer closed** between generator sessions — they hold cold for hours if left shut.
- **Refill water each session** so you always have a full tank and full containers going into the next rest.
- **Save water for flushing** from the tub and buckets, so a rest period is never a problem.
- **Check on the vulnerable** — anyone with medical needs, and neighbors who live alone.
- **Rest at night** — most folks shut the generator off overnight and rely on the water and cold they banked.

A longer outage is far more comfortable than folks fear, once you have a rhythm. The generator sessions become a small chore, like feeding a stove, and life goes on around them.

✓ Bank cold and water before each rest

Right before you shut the generator down, refill your water and let the fridge get good and cold. Then a quiet rest period costs you nothing.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

An outage game plan helps any home, but the water steps only matter for one of them.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs on city water, your outage plan is about comfort and food, not water — the taps keep flowing. Your generator sessions focus on the fridge, the furnace, and some lights, and you can skip the water-capturing steps entirely.

- No need to capture water — city water keeps flowing through the outage.
- Focus your generator time on the fridge, freezer, furnace, and lights.
- The carbon-monoxide and safe-hookup rules still apply exactly.
- A shorter in-town outage may not even need the generator at all.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country on a well, the water steps are the heart of the plan: capture the reserve early, then use the generator to refill in sessions. This is where a game plan truly earns its keep.

- Capture water first, while the pressure tank's reserve still flows.
- Run the pump in sessions to refill — your signature fuel-saving rhythm.
- Plan for a longer outage, since rural lines are restored last.
- Keep the tub and buckets filled for flushing between sessions.

★ I will tailor the plan to your home

Whether you are on a well or city water changes the steps that matter. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we will write a plan that fits your exact setup.

When the power comes back

The end of the outage has its own short routine. Do it in order and you protect your equipment.

- ❑ Make sure the utility power is truly back and steady — watch for a few minutes, as it can flicker at first.
- ❑ At the panel, switch back from the generator to the grid, through your transfer switch or interlock.
- ❑ Let the generator run a moment with no load, then shut it off.
- ❑ Let it cool, then store it safely with fuel handled per its manual.
- ❑ Refill any water and fuel you used, so you are ready for next time.

Switching back before you shut the generator down matters — you do not want the generator suddenly fighting the returning grid. Your transfer switch or interlock makes this a simple, safe flip. Then a little tidying up leaves you ready for the next one.

✓ Reset for next time, right away

Top up fuel and water while it is fresh in your mind. Future-you, at the start of the next outage, will be grateful to find everything ready.

A simple outage readiness kit

Half of a smooth outage is having your things in one place. Here is a kit worth keeping ready.

- **Flashlights and batteries** — and a headlamp, so your hands are free at the generator.
- **The generator cord** — coiled, dry, and easy to find in the dark.
- **Clean water containers** and a couple of buckets for flushing.
- **Fresh fuel or a spare propane tank**, stored safely outdoors.
- **Your written game plan and phone numbers** — the well company, your electrician, and me.

Keep it together in a bin or a corner of the garage, and glance at it when you change your clocks. A kit you can find in the dark turns the first dark minutes from a hunt into a routine.

✓ One bin, one place

Store the outage things together, not scattered. When the power goes, you want to reach for one bin, not search five rooms with a phone light.

When you can see it coming

Many outages give you warning — a storm in the forecast. A little prep beforehand makes the outage itself almost easy.

- ❑ Fill your stored water containers and the bathtub while the power is still on.
- ❑ Top up the generator's fuel and check its oil.
- ❑ Charge phones, tablets, and any power station to full.
- ❑ Get the fridge and freezer good and cold, and freeze some water jugs to help hold the cold.
- ❑ Bring the generator, cord, and flashlights to where you can reach them quickly.

None of this takes long, and it means that if the power does go, you start the outage with water stored, fuel ready, and everything charged. The storm becomes a minor inconvenience instead of a scramble.

✓ A forecast is a free head start

When you see bad weather coming, spend twenty minutes getting ready. It is the cheapest, easiest thing you can do to sail through an outage.

Write your plan down

A plan in your head helps only you, and only if you are home and calm. A written plan helps the whole household.

Put your game plan on a single page and tape it inside a kitchen or utility cabinet. Keep it plain: capture water, start the generator outdoors, switch over, run in sessions, switch back. Anyone in the house — a spouse, a visiting grandchild, a neighbor lending a hand — can follow it, even on a day you are not there.

Add the key phone numbers and the location of your kit. Our outage checklist guide gives you a ready-made page you can copy. A written plan is the difference between 'I hope I remember' and 'I know exactly what to do.'

★ I will help you write yours

We can put your plan on one clear page, tailored to your home and taped where everyone can find it. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

A few common myths, gently corrected

These trip people up during outages. Here is the honest version.

The myth	The honest truth
Start the generator first, worry about water later.	Capture the pressure-tank reserve first — it runs out fast.
Run the generator nonstop to be safe.	Sessions save fuel and give quiet — the tank holds you between.
Cracking the garage door makes it safe to run inside.	No — carbon monoxide still builds up and can kill. Outdoors only.
Just shut the generator off when power returns.	Switch back to the grid first, then shut it down.

! The garage myth is the deadly one

An open door does not make it safe to run a generator inside. Carbon monoxide is invisible and builds up fast. Always run it well outside the house.

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

Here is my honest role in your outage readiness.

- **What I do:** help you write a game plan for your home, build your readiness kit, practice the switch-over on a calm day, and be a phone call away during an outage.
- **A licensed electrician does** the transfer switch or interlock and any panel work — the part that makes the whole plan safe.
- **A well or pump professional** handles the pump itself and can answer questions about your system.

I am a patient tech helper with 30-plus years of experience, not a licensed electrician — and I will always be clear about that. What I bring is a calm, plain-English hand in getting ready, so an outage feels like a routine instead of an emergency.

★ A friendly voice when the lights go out

If you get stuck mid-outage, call or text me at (330) 200-8042. Sometimes a calm voice walking you through a step is all it takes.

The mistakes that catch people out

Most outage trouble on a well home comes from a few avoidable slip-ups.

- **Not capturing water early**, so the pressure-tank reserve is wasted.
- **Running the generator too close to the house** — the carbon-monoxide danger.
- **Overloading the generator** by starting the pump with big loads already on.
- **Never practicing** the plan, so the first real switch-over is in the dark.
- **Forgetting to reset** — no refueled generator or refilled water for the next outage.

Our common-mistakes guide covers each in detail. A written plan and one calm-day practice run quietly remove nearly all of them.

✓ Practice once, relax forever

The single best fix is a dry run on a calm day. After that, a real outage feels familiar instead of frightening.

Questions worth asking yourself now

Answer these on a calm day and your game plan is most of the way written.

Q: Do I know how to switch to generator power on my own?

If not, ask your electrician for a walk-through, or call me. You should be able to do it calmly in the dark.

Q: Where is my kit, and is it complete?

Flashlights, cord, water containers, fuel, and your written plan — all in one place you can find quickly.

Q: How much fuel do I keep on hand?

Enough for the kind of long outage the country gets. Store it safely and rotate gasoline so it stays fresh.

Q: Who in my household can run the plan if I am not home?

Walk a spouse or neighbor through it once, and tape the written plan where they can find it.

✓ Answer them before you need them

Every one of these is easy to answer on a quiet afternoon and hard to figure out in a dark, stormy hurry. Do it now.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about handling an outage on a well home.

Q: What is the very first thing I should do when the power goes out?

Capture water. While your pressure tank's reserve still flows, fill drinking containers and the bathtub. Then turn to the generator.

Q: Do I have to run the generator the whole time?

No. Run it in sessions — long enough to refill water and cool the fridge — then rest it. That saves fuel and gives you quiet.

Q: Can I run the generator in the garage if it is raining?

Never. Carbon monoxide can kill even with the door open. Run it well outside, with a cover made for generators if needed.

Q: What do I do when the power comes back?

Switch back to the grid at the panel first, then shut the generator off and let it cool. Refill fuel and water for next time.

★ 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.

A gentle word about staying comfortable

An outage is an inconvenience, not a crisis, when you have a plan. Let me leave you with the reassuring part.

With water captured, a generator you know how to run, and a rhythm of sessions, a rural outage becomes a manageable stretch rather than an emergency. You will have water, cold food, heat, and light — maybe not every convenience at once, but everything that matters.

The families I help are always surprised how calm an outage feels once they have done it once with a plan. The first time is the hardest; after that, it is just a chore you know how to do. That confidence is the real goal of this guide.

★ Confidence is the goal

You do not need to be an expert — you need a plan and one practice run. My first visit is a flat \$99 with a 30-day come-back-free guarantee, and I can help you rehearse it on your screen for \$49.

Bringing it all together — your outage, in order

If this guide did its job, the whole outage fits on one calm list. Here it is.

- ❑ **First:** stay calm, capture water while the pressure tank still flows.
- ❑ **Then:** generator outdoors and running, switch over safely, start the pump.
- ❑ **Settle:** run in sessions, keep the fridge shut, rest at night.
- ❑ **Finally:** switch back to the grid when power holds, then reset for next time.

Write those four lines on a card, practice them once, and you have a game plan you can trust. Take it at your own pace — calm beats fast every time.

★ 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 having a calm plan for the next 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.

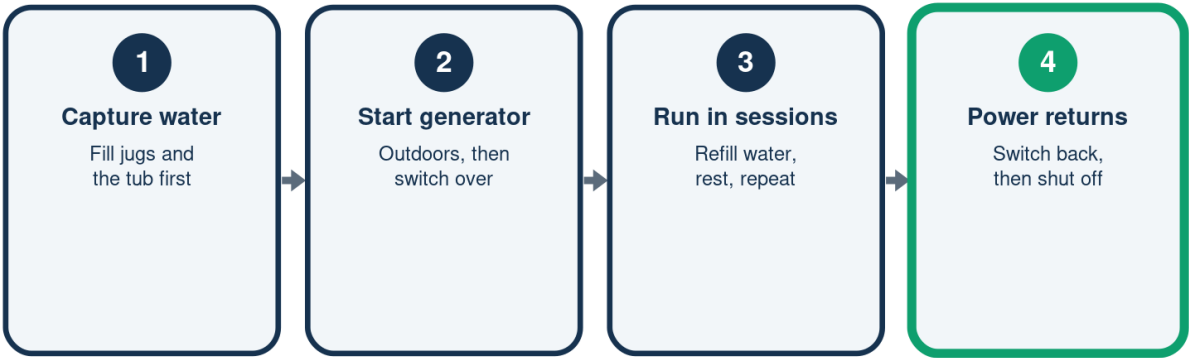
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, 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

Your Outage, Start to Finish

The calm order of things



Water first, then power -- calm beats fast.

The First Five Minutes

Do these before touching the generator

	Step	Why
Confirm outage	Not a tripped	breaker
Capture water	Reserve runs	out fast
Check on people	Medical needs,	neighbors
Find lights	Before heading	outside

Starting the generator is not step one -- water is.

Running Nonstop vs. In Sessions

Why sessions win on a well home

	Nonstop	In sessions
Fuel use	High	Much lower
Noise	Constant	Quiet between
Water	Always on	Refilled each run
Best for	Rarely needed	Most outages

The pressure tank holds you between sessions.

Is It Safe to Start the Generator?

A quick safety check, every time



Outdoors only and never a backfeed -- the two hard rules.

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



Need a Real Person?

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You just have to remember you can call.
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BILL'S PROMISE

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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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