



An Extended Guide · No. 1889

When a Robot's Maker Shuts Down — Keeping It Working Without the App

Keep your robot cleaning,
whatever the company does

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When the company behind your robot goes quiet

It's an unsettling headline: the maker of your robot vacuum or mower has gone bankrupt, been bought by another company, or is shutting down the app. This guide is here to calm that worry and show you, step by step, how to keep your robot working.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. In 30+ years of helping folks with their gear, I've learned that these scares are rarely as bad as they first sound. A robot you already own usually keeps cleaning — the trick is knowing what might change and getting a few simple protections in place before you need them.

We'll keep this plain and practical. What actually happens when a maker closes its doors, how to keep your current robot running without the app, and — when it's time for your next one — how to pick a brand that won't leave you stranded. No jargon, no panic.

★ Worried about a headline you saw?

If you've read something scary about the company that made your robot and you're not sure what it means for you, call or text me at (330) 200-8042. I'll give you the honest picture and help you decide if you need to do anything at all.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you'll be ready for whatever happens to the company behind your robot.

- ❑ A robot you already own usually keeps cleaning — the buttons and basic cleaning rarely stop working overnight.
- ❑ What can change: the app, remote control from away, saved maps, and future updates — these lean on the maker's servers.
- ❑ Learn the buttons on the robot itself, so you can run it without the phone if you ever have to.
- ❑ Write down your exact model, and keep the manual — parts and help are far easier to find when you know what you own.
- ❑ Buy spare filters and brushes while they're easy to get.
- ❑ For your next robot, favor one with local control, simple buttons, and good parts availability — it depends less on any one company.

✓ One calm rule to hold onto

A sudden headline almost never means your robot stops that day. You have time to take a few sensible steps — there's no need to rush out and replace a machine that's working fine.

What a shutdown or buyout actually means

'The maker is shutting down' can mean several different things, and they don't all hit your robot the same way. Let's sort them out.

The company is bought by another

This is the most common and usually the gentlest. New owners typically keep the app and support running, at least for a while, because they want to keep customers happy. Things can change later, so it's worth watching — but your robot generally carries on as normal.

The company closes or goes bankrupt

Even here, the robot in your home doesn't suddenly die. What's at risk over time is the online side — the app, the servers it talks to, and new updates. The machine's own brain and buttons keep working.

The app or cloud service is switched off

This is the one that bites. If the maker turns off the servers the app relies on, you can lose remote control, scheduling through the app, saved maps, and updates. But most robots still clean from their own buttons.

The good news: what usually keeps working

Before we talk about what you might lose, let's be clear about how much usually keeps right on going. It's more than people fear.

Your robot's ability to clean lives inside the robot, not on some faraway computer. The motors, the sensors, the cliff detection that keeps it off your stairs, and the buttons on top — none of that needs the company's servers to work. Press the clean button and, in most cases, off it goes.

The dock still charges it. Spare parts you already have still fit. The robot still finds its way home to recharge. For a lot of owners, cleaning from the button is 90 percent of what they ever used anyway.

✓ The button is your safety net

If you've only ever started your robot from the phone, try the button on top of the robot once, today, while everything still works. Knowing it runs without the app turns a future scare into a shrug.

What you might lose — and how much it matters

Being honest, some features do lean on the company's servers. Here's what can go, roughly in order of how much folks miss it.

- **Remote control from away** — starting the robot from the grocery store or across town usually needs the cloud. From home, the button still works.
- **App scheduling** — if the schedule lives on the maker's servers, it may stop. Some robots keep a schedule in their own memory.
- **Saved maps and no-go zones** — these are often stored online, so they can disappear. The robot may fall back to a simpler clean.
- **Software updates** — new features and fixes stop coming. What you have keeps working; it just won't improve.
- **Voice assistant links** — 'Alexa, start the vacuum' may break if the bridge between them shuts down.

! Don't delete the app in a panic

If you hear the maker is in trouble, resist the urge to uninstall the app. A working app is worth keeping — see the next pages. Removing it can lock you out of settings you'd rather keep while it still works.

How to keep your current robot running

A handful of simple, do-it-once steps protect you against almost anything the company might do. None of them is technical.

Learn the physical buttons

Find the clean button, the dock/home button, and the spot button if it has one. Run a clean from the button at least once so you know it works. This is the single most useful thing you can do.

Keep the app installed and don't change phones carelessly

As long as the app works, keep it. If you switch phones, set the app up on the new one before the old one is gone — re-registering can get harder once a company stops supporting it.

★ I'll walk you through the buttons

If your robot's buttons are a mystery — or there's a confusing mix of taps and holds — I'm glad to sit down and show you, in plain English, exactly how to run it without the phone. Call (330) 200-8042.

A few protections worth setting up now

Think of these like keeping a spare key: a little effort today, a lot of peace of mind later.

- **Write down your exact model** — the full model name and number, kept with your home papers. It makes finding parts and help far easier.
- **Keep the manual** — paper or a saved copy. It's where the button tricks and reset steps live.
- **Use local or offline control if your robot offers it** — some let you run them over your own home network with little or no cloud.
- **Save your map and settings** where the app allows it, so a tidy clean survives if the servers change.
- **Note your Wi-Fi details** — the network name and password, so you can reconnect the robot after any phone or router change.

✓ Stock the cheap parts while you can

Filters, side brushes, and the main brush are inexpensive and easy to find while a company is healthy. Buying a spare set now means your robot keeps running smoothly even if parts get scarce later.

Stocking spare parts before they vanish

When a company winds down, the parts tend to dry up before the robots stop working. A small shelf of spares keeps yours going for years.

The parts that wear out are predictable and cheap: filters, the side brush that sweeps corners, the main brush or roller, and eventually the battery. While the maker is still selling them, it's worth buying a spare of each — especially the filter and brushes you replace most often.

The battery is the one with a clock on it. All batteries fade over years whether you use them or not, so I wouldn't stockpile those, but knowing where to get the right replacement — and its exact model — is worth sorting out now rather than when the robot finally slows down.

! Match the part to your exact model

Parts that look alike often don't fit. This is why writing down your exact model matters — it's the difference between a part that drops right in and one that's close but useless.

A real example: the Roomba story

You may have heard that iRobot — the company behind Roomba — went through a big change. It's a useful, real-world example of how these things actually play out.

In late 2025 iRobot filed for bankruptcy, and in early 2026 it emerged as a private company, now owned by Picea Robotics, the Chinese manufacturer that had long built its robots. After about 35 years, it stopped being an independent American company. That's a genuinely big shift.

And yet, so far, iRobot has said it's 'business as usual' — the app keeps working, warranties are being honored, and product support continues. As part of the deal, a U.S.-based group with its own data security officer was set up to handle privacy concerns. For most owners, the robots kept right on cleaning.

✓ Reassuring — but it's their own word

Those 'business as usual' promises are the company's own, and ownership changes can eventually change apps, cloud services, and parts. So a Roomba owner's smart move is exactly this guide: learn the buttons, note the model, keep the app, and stock a few parts. Facts here reflect 2026 — check the current status.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

How much a maker's troubles affect you depends a lot on how you use your robot. Picture which of these sounds more like you.

The button-and-go owner

If you mostly press the button and let the robot clean one floor, a shutdown barely touches you — your way of using it doesn't need the cloud much at all.

- Cleaning from the button keeps working through almost any shutdown.
- Learn the home/dock button too, and you've covered your daily use.
- Keep a spare filter and brush, and you're set for years.
- No need to rush out and replace a robot that still does its job.

The app-and-schedule owner

If you lean on maps, no-go zones, schedules, and starting the robot while you're out, you've got more to protect — those are the features most tied to the maker's servers.

- Save your map and schedule settings while the app still works.
- Learn the buttons as a backup for when remote control may stop.
- Check whether your robot offers local, over-the-network control.
- For your next robot, lean toward local control and open standards.

★ Not sure which you are?

Tell me how you actually use your robot day to day and I'll tell you exactly which protections are worth your time — and which you can skip. Call (330) 200-8042.

Choosing a robot that won't strand you

When it's time for your next robot, a little foresight buys you a machine that depends less on any single company staying in business.

The key idea is independence. A robot that can run entirely from its own buttons and over your own home network doesn't care much whether the maker is thriving or struggling. One that needs to phone home to a company server for every little thing is only as reliable as that company.

You don't have to give up smart features to get this. Plenty of good robots offer both — the convenience of an app when the company's healthy, and the safety of local control and buttons when it isn't. That's the combination to look for.

✓ Ask the question out loud

Before you buy, ask the salesperson or the listing: 'Can this robot run and be scheduled without the internet?' A clear yes is a very good sign.

What 'local control' really means

You'll see the phrase 'local control' and it sounds technical. It isn't. It just means the robot can take its orders from inside your home rather than from a company far away.

With cloud control, pressing 'clean' on your phone sends a message out to the maker's server, which sends it back to your robot. If that server is off, the message never arrives. With local control, your phone talks to the robot directly over your own Wi-Fi — no outside company required.

The practical upside: a robot with local control keeps answering your phone even if the maker vanishes entirely. It's quieter about your home, too, since less is sent out over the internet. Not every robot offers it, which is exactly why it's worth asking about.

★ I can check this for you

If you're weighing a robot and can't tell from the listing whether it does local control, send it my way. Sorting out that kind of fine print is exactly what I'm here for. Call (330) 200-8042.

Open standards like Matter

There's a newer industry standard called Matter, and it's worth understanding because it can make your gear less dependent on any one company.

Matter is a common language that smart-home devices from different makers can all speak. The idea is that a device which supports Matter can work with different apps and hubs — not just the maker's own — so you're less locked in to a single company's good behavior.

It's still maturing, and support for robots varies, so I'd treat it as a nice bonus rather than a dealbreaker today. But when two robots are otherwise even, one that supports open standards is the more future-proof pick. We cover Matter more in our voice-and-schedules guide.

✓ Open standards age better

A device tied only to its maker's app is only as alive as that app. One that speaks a shared standard has more ways to stay useful if its original maker ever steps away.

Favor strong parts availability

A robot is only as long-lived as the parts you can get for it. Before you buy, it pays to peek at how easy those parts are to find.

An established brand sold through mainstream stores tends to have filters and brushes you can buy for years, often from several sellers. A rock-bottom robot from an unknown brand may have no parts at all the moment the company moves on — and then a worn brush ends the machine.

Before buying, do a quick search for the robot's replacement filter and brush. If they're easy to find and fairly priced today, that's a good sign they'll be around when you need them. If you can't find them at all, take that as a warning.

! No parts means no robot

The fanciest robot on earth is scrap once a worn part can't be replaced. Parts availability quietly matters more than almost any feature on the box.

Why buttons on the robot matter more than ever

In an age of app-everything, a humble set of buttons on the robot itself has quietly become one of its most valuable features.

A robot you can fully run from its own buttons — start a clean, send it home, maybe a spot clean — is a robot that can never be fully switched off by a company. The app can break, the servers can go dark, and you can still clean your floors. That's real independence.

Some newer robots have stripped the buttons down to almost nothing, pushing everything into the app. Lovely when all's well — but it means the robot is helpless if the app stops. When you shop, a good set of on-robot buttons is a quiet mark of a machine that'll outlast its maker.

✓ Try the buttons in the store

If you can, press the buttons on a display model before you buy. Can you tell what each one does without the manual? Simple, clear buttons are a sign of a robot that's easy to live with for the long haul.

Keeping an eye out after a buyout

If the company behind your robot changes hands, you don't need to do anything drastic — just keep a gentle eye out for a few signs.

- **App update notes** — watch for messages about features being removed or accounts needing to be re-made.
- **Emails from the maker** — real notices about service changes usually come by email; read them rather than deleting unread.
- **Features quietly disappearing** — if scheduling or remote start stops working, that's your cue to lean on the buttons.
- **Parts getting harder to find** — if filters start selling out, grab a spare set while you can.

★ Forward me the confusing emails

If you get a message from the maker and can't tell whether it matters, you're welcome to run it by me. I'll tell you plainly whether it needs any action on your part. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

When is it actually time to replace?

A maker shutting down is rarely, by itself, a reason to replace a working robot. Here's how to tell the difference between a scare and a real end.

A working robot that still cleans from its buttons is worth keeping, shutdown or not. The time to think about replacing is when the machine itself can't do its job anymore — a worn part you can't replace, a battery that won't hold a charge, or a breakdown with no repair path.

If you mostly used app features that have now stopped and you truly miss them, that's a fair reason to upgrade — but do it on your timeline, with the lessons from this guide, not in a panic the week of the headline.

✓ Let the robot tell you when

The robot itself will let you know when it's genuinely done — it stops cleaning well, a part fails with no replacement, or the battery gives out. A news story about the company is not the same thing.

A calm plan you can set and forget

Let's gather it all into one short routine. Do these once and you can stop worrying about what the company does.

- ☐ I've run my robot from its buttons at least once and know it works.
- ☐ I've written down my exact model and kept it with my home papers.
- ☐ I've kept the manual, on paper or saved.
- ☐ I've bought a spare filter and brush set.
- ☐ I know my Wi-Fi name and password in case I need to reconnect.
- ☐ I've checked whether my robot offers local, over-the-network control.

✓ Done is done

Once these boxes are ticked, there's genuinely nothing more to do. You can read the scary headlines with a cup of coffee and a clear conscience, because your robot is ready either way.

Setting honest expectations

Let me be straight with you about what these protections can and can't do, so there are no surprises.

What they can do: keep your robot cleaning from its buttons, protect your parts supply, and make sure you're never locked out of your own machine. For the everyday job of keeping floors tidy, you're well covered.

What they can't do: bring back a cloud feature the maker has switched off, or keep updates flowing from a company that's gone. If a feature truly lived on the company's servers and those servers are off, it's off — which is exactly why choosing local-control robots next time matters so much.

! Beware anyone selling panic

If someone urges you to replace a perfectly good robot 'before it stops working,' be skeptical. A robot that cleans from its buttons today will almost certainly clean from its buttons tomorrow. Take your time.

Questions to ask before your next robot

Whether you're talking to a salesperson or to me, these questions get you a robot that won't be held hostage by its maker.

Q: Can this robot run and be scheduled without the internet?

A clear yes means local control — the robot keeps answering your phone even if the maker's servers go dark. It's the single best question to ask.

Q: Does it have real buttons on the robot itself?

Buttons to start a clean and send it home mean you can run it with no app at all. A robot that's app-only is helpless if the app stops.

Q: How easy are replacement parts to get?

Search for the filter and brush before you buy. Easy-to-find parts from an established brand mean a robot that lasts; no parts means a short life.

Q: Does it support open standards like Matter?

Not a dealbreaker today, but a robot that speaks a shared standard has more ways to stay useful if its maker ever steps away.

✓ There's no silly question

If a salesperson brushes off these questions or can't answer them, that's telling you something. A good robot earns a straight answer.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from folks worried about the company behind their robot, answered plainly.

Q: My robot's maker went bankrupt — will it stop working?

Almost certainly not right away. The robot cleans from its own brain and buttons, which don't need the company. What's at risk over time is the app, remote control, and updates — so learn the buttons and stock a few parts.

Q: Should I uninstall the app if the company is in trouble?

No — keep a working app as long as it works. It's your way to save maps and settings while you still can. Just learn the buttons too, as a backup for the day the app may stop.

Q: What happened with Roomba, and should I worry?

iRobot went bankrupt in late 2025 and emerged in early 2026 under new owners, saying it's business as usual. Most Roombas kept cleaning. Take the sensible steps in this guide and you're well covered. This reflects 2026 — check current status.

Q: How do I pick a robot that won't leave me stranded?

Favor local control, real buttons on the robot, easy-to-find parts, and support for open standards like Matter. That combination depends far less on any one company staying in business.

Q: Do I need to replace my robot because of a shutdown?

Rarely. Replace when the machine itself can't do its job — a worn part you can't get, a dead battery, a breakdown with no fix. A news story about the company is not the same as a broken robot.

★ Still uneasy about it?

This is exactly the kind of worry I love to put to rest. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll make a calm, simple plan to keep your robot working — whatever the company does.

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 a robot working when its maker shuts down 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. I'll help you choose the right machine, get it set up and mapped, connect it to your Wi-Fi and your phone, and show you how to run it. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site — app settings, schedules, a quick question — I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. For anything that calls for a ladder, wiring, or digging, I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro rather than risk it.

★ 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

What a Shutdown Changes

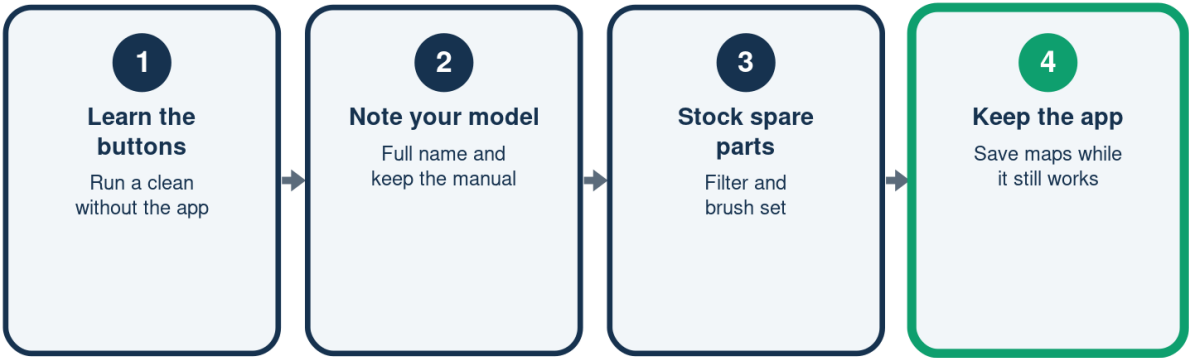
Most cleaning keeps working; the online extras are what's at risk

	What you use	After a shutdown
Clean button	Keeps working	on the robot
Cliff sensors	Keep working;	still safe
Remote start	May stop	(needs cloud)
App schedule	May stop	or be lost
Saved maps	May disappear	over time
Updates	Stop coming;	what you have stays

The robot itself cleans without the company's servers.

Protect Yourself in Four Steps

Do these once and stop worrying about the headlines



A little effort now; a lot of peace of mind later.

Choosing a Future-Proof Robot

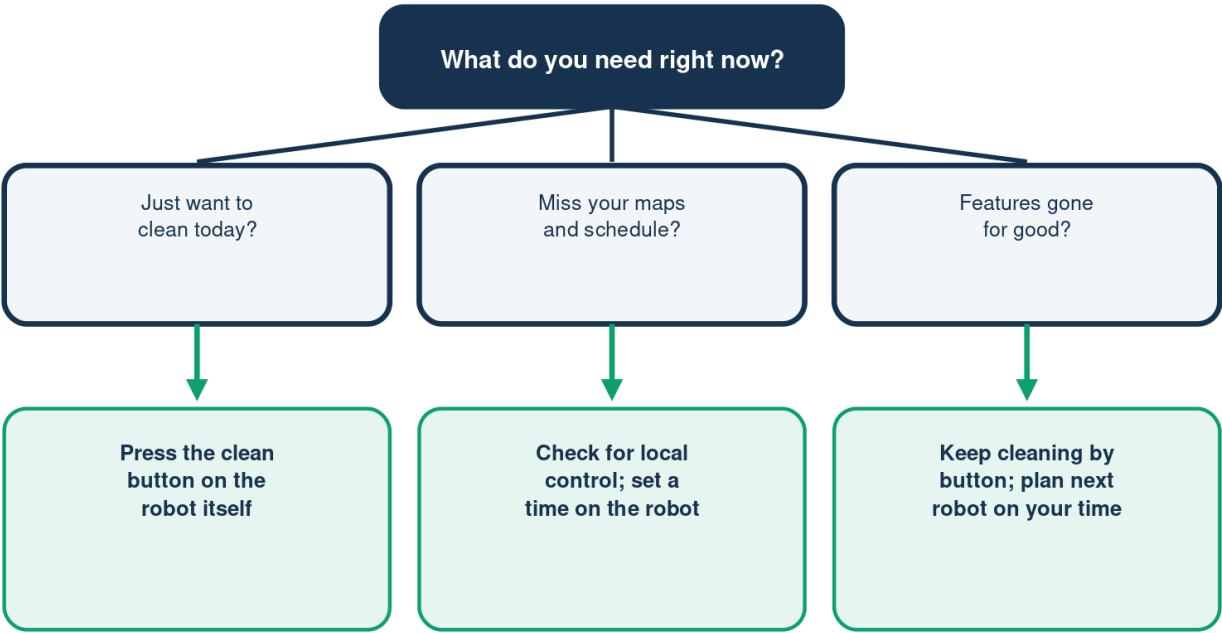
Lean toward independence from any one company

	Look for	Why it helps
Local control	Runs over your	own Wi-Fi
Real buttons	Works with	no app at all
Easy parts	Keeps running	for years
Matter support	More ways to	stay useful

These depend less on the maker staying in business.

App Just Died -- Now What?

A calm path through the moment the app stops



A dead app is rarely a dead robot -- take your time.

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



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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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