



Winterizing Your RV and Boat Tech

fine in spring An Extended Guide · No. 2062

— An Extended Guide · No. 2062 —

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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THE 60-SECOND VERSION

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1. The Whole Idea in One Glance If you read only this page, you will still make a smart choice. Winterizing the tech in your rig and boat comes down to a few simple ideas. Batteries hate the cold and hate sitting empty, so keep them charged and, if you can, warm. Delicate electronics that are not built for weather should come indoors. And whatever you leave behind should be powered, sheltered, and checked on now and then. Do these and spring is a happy surprise instead of a string of dead gadgets. Keep batteries charged on a maintainer, above freezing if you can Bring indoor-grade electronics inside, dry and warm A stored Starlink or router can stay only if powered and sheltered Back up any camera footage and photos before you put things away Write down what you did, so spring is a quick checklist, not a mystery If you remember only one thing: a battery left discharged in an Ohio winter can freeze and be ruined. Keeping it charged on a maintainer is the single most important thing in this guide. WHY WINTERIZE 2. Why the Tech Needs Winterizing Too Most folks know to drain the water lines before winter, but the electronics need care too, and they are easy to forget. Months of hard freezing, damp, and temperature swings quietly shorten the life of batteries, screens, and sensitive gear. A couple of hours in the fall protects hundreds or thousands of dollars of gadgets. Cold and damp shorten the life of batteries and electronics A discharged battery can freeze and crack Moisture creeps into screens and connectors left out A little fall care prevents expensive spring surprises TIP Think of the tech as another system to put to bed, right alongside the plumbing. The water lines get the headlines, but the batteries and electronics are where the real money sits.

OHIO WINTER

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3. What an Ohio Winter Does Here in Portage County and across Northeast Ohio, winter means long stretches below freezing, lake-effect snow, and the thaw-and-refreeze that is so hard on anything left outside. A rig parked from late fall through early spring sits through months of this. The gear inside it feels every bit of that cold, which is why our winters demand real attention. Months of below-freezing cold, not just a cold snap Lake-effect snow that piles up and lingers Thaw-and-refreeze cycles that work moisture into everything A long season from late fall to early spring Our winters are long enough that 'it will probably be fine' is a gamble. A battery or a camera that might survive a mild winter elsewhere often does not survive a full Ohio one left untended. MAKE A PLAN 4. Make a Simple Plan First Five minutes of planning saves hours in spring. Before you touch anything, decide two things: where the rig or boat will sit, and whether it will have power there. Those two answers shape every other choice. A heated garage asks very little of you; a bare lot with no outlet asks the most. Figure this out and the rest of the guide falls into place. Where will it sit — home, a lot, a garage, indoors? Will there be power at that spot? Heated and indoors: the easy case Outdoors with no power: plan for batteries and bringing gear inside TIP Jot your plan on paper: where it sits, what has power, and what you will bring inside. That same sheet becomes your spring wake-up list, so nothing gets left frozen or forgotten.

BATTERIES FIRST

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5. Batteries Come First If you do nothing else, take care of the batteries. They are the most expensive thing to replace and the most likely to die over winter if ignored. The two rules are simple: do not let them sit discharged, and do not let them freeze while empty.

Everything else about winter batteries flows from those two rules. Batteries are the costliest thing to lose over winter. Never let a battery sit discharged for months. A discharged battery can freeze and be ruined. Keep them charged, and warm if you can manage it. My RV and boat batteries guide goes deeper on the different types and how to care for each. For winter, the headline is the same for all of them: keep them charged and do not let them freeze flat.

THE MAINTAINER

6. Keeping Batteries on a Maintainer A battery maintainer, sometimes called a trickle charger or a tender, is a small charger you leave plugged in all winter. It keeps a battery topped up without overcharging it, so it stays healthy for months. If your storage spot has power, a maintainer is the easiest and best thing you can do for your batteries. A maintainer keeps a battery full without overcharging. Leave it plugged in through the whole off-season. It is the simplest way to winter a battery well. Match the maintainer to your battery type. TIP Use a maintainer made for your battery's chemistry, because a lithium battery and a lead-acid battery want different charging. The wrong charger can do harm. If you are unsure which you have, I can check it for you.

NO POWER**7. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

7. When There's No Power for a Maintainer If your storage spot has no outlet, you cannot run a maintainer, so you need another plan. The common answer is to pull the batteries out and bring them somewhere with power, like a garage, where you can keep them charged and above freezing. A small solar panel can also keep a battery topped up outdoors. No outlet means no maintainer at the rig Pull the batteries and bring them to a powered spot Keep them charged and above freezing indoors A small solar panel can maintain a battery outdoors A battery stored in a cool, dry garage on a maintainer will likely outlast one left in a rig all winter. If you can carry it inside, that is often the best home for it until spring.

CHARGE LEVEL 8. The Right Charge to Store At Batteries like to be stored with a good charge in them, not run down. A full or nearly full charge keeps a battery from freezing and keeps it healthy over months. The old advice of storing a battery empty is wrong and will ruin it. Charge it up before storage, and keep it that way. Store batteries charged, not run down A good charge resists freezing and keeps the battery healthy Never store a battery empty A maintainer holds the right level for you WATCH OUT An empty battery freezes at a much higher temperature than a full one, so a discharged battery left in the cold is the one most likely to crack. Charge it before you walk away for the season.

DISCONNECT**8. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

9. Disconnecting and Cutting Drains Even switched off, a rig slowly sips power from its batteries through little always-on things like a clock or a propane detector. Over a long winter that quiet drain can empty a battery. Using the rig's battery cutoff switch, or disconnecting the battery, stops that slow leak while it sits. Rigs draw a little power even when switched off That slow drain can empty a battery over winter Use the battery cutoff switch if your rig has one Or disconnect the battery terminals to stop the leak TIP If you keep the battery connected to run winter security gear, remember it will drain faster, so lean on a maintainer or solar to keep up. My camper security guide covers watching a stored rig over the winter. BRING INDOORS 10. What to Bring Indoors A good rule of thumb: if a gadget is not clearly built to live outdoors, it comes inside for the winter. Cold and damp are hard on anything delicate, and a dry closet at room temperature is a far kinder home than a frozen rig. Make a little gathering trip through the rig and boat and collect the loose electronics. Anything not weather-rated comes indoors Cold and damp harm delicate electronics A dry, room-temperature spot is far kinder Gather the loose gadgets in one pass through the rig When in doubt, bring it in. It costs nothing but a little shelf space, and a box of gadgets in a warm closet is a box that works perfectly in the spring.

STARLINK

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11. The Starlink Dish and Router If you travel with Starlink, the off-season is the time to pause the plan and decide what to do with the gear. For most people the answer is simple: pause the Roam plan so you stop paying, and bring the dish and router indoors where it is dry and above freezing. A stored dish can stay outside only if it is powered and sheltered. Pause the Roam plan so you are not paying all winter Bring the Mini and router indoors, dry and not frozen A dish left out should be powered and sheltered Reconnect and resume a day before your first spring trip TIP The one time to leave Starlink powered and running over winter is if you use it to feed security cameras on the stored rig. Otherwise, pause the plan and bring it inside. My Starlink guide covers pausing step by step. CAMERAS 12. Cameras and Monitors Backup cameras, dash cams, and any monitors should be treated by the same rule: weather-rated gear can stay, delicate gear comes in. A dash cam on the windshield especially should come inside, because its little battery and screen suffer in the cold. Pull the memory cards and back up anything you want to keep first. Weather-rated cameras can stay; delicate ones come inside A windshield dash cam should always come in Its small battery and screen suffer in the cold Pull memory cards and back up footage first WATCH OUT Dash cam memory cards wear out and can fail, so back up any footage you care about before winter. A card left to freeze all season is more likely to come back empty in the spring.

SECURITY CAMERAS

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13. Winter Security Cameras Watching the stored rig over winter is its own worthwhile project, and it changes the calculation on power. If you run security cameras and sensors on the parked rig, you will keep some power and internet running, which is fine, as long as you plan for the drain and the cold. This is the one case where you do not bring everything indoors. Security cameras need to stay powered and watching Plan for the extra battery drain they cause Use weather-rated cameras or a solar-fed setup A freeze sensor inside warns you before cold does damage My camper security guide covers cameras, trackers, and freeze sensors for a stored rig in full. Winterizing and watching the rig go hand in hand through the off-season. FREEZE SENSORS 14. A Freeze Sensor as a Watchman A freeze sensor is a cheap little gadget that watches the inside temperature and pings your phone when it drops toward freezing. Even in a well-winterized rig, it is a reassuring watchman that tells you if a heater fails or the cold is winning somewhere it should not. It pairs naturally with the rest of your winter care. Warns your phone when the inside nears freezing Catches a failed heater or an unexpected cold spot Cheap, battery powered, easy to place inside A reassuring backstop to good winterizing WATCH OUT A freeze sensor is a warning, not a substitute for draining your water lines. It buys you time to react, but the real freeze protection is the winterizing itself. Do both.

SCREENS**11. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

15. Screens and Displays Fish finders, chartplotters, GPS units, TVs, and tablets all have screens that do not love the cold. A hard freeze can be rough on a display, and moisture can creep behind the glass. Bring the removable ones indoors, and for the mounted ones, keep them dry and consider covering them. Fish finders and plotters have screens that dislike freezing Moisture can creep behind the glass over winter Remove and bring in the ones that come off easily Cover and keep dry the ones that stay mounted Many boat fish finders pop off their mounts with a quick release made for exactly this. Pull the screen, bring it in for the winter, and reattach it in the spring in seconds. FISH FINDERS 16. Boat Electronics and Fish Finders On the boat, the sonar, GPS, and stereo need the same care as the rig's gadgets. Most fish finder and chartplotter heads unclip from their mounts so you can carry them inside. The transducer and wiring that stay with the boat should be left clean and dry. Note how it all comes apart so spring reassembly is easy. Unclip fish finder and plotter heads and bring them in Leave the transducer and wiring clean and dry on the boat Protect any connectors from moisture Note how it comes apart for easy spring setup TIP Take a photo of the wiring and mounts before you pull anything off the boat. Come spring, those pictures turn a puzzle back into a two-minute job. My boat electronics guide covers the gear itself.

STEREO

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17. The Marine Stereo and Speakers A boat stereo and its speakers are usually weather-rated enough to stay aboard, but a removable faceplate or any add-on should come in. Disconnect the power so the stereo does not sip from the battery all winter, and cover the speakers if your boat sits in the open. A little cover keeps the sun and weather off. Marine stereos usually stay, but remove a faceplate if it detaches Disconnect power so it does not drain the battery Cover speakers if the boat sits out in the open Protect any exposed connections from moisture Even a weatherproof stereo left connected will slowly draw on the battery. Cutting its power for the winter is one more small way to protect the battery you worked to charge. PHONES AND TABLETS 18. Phones, Tablets and Power Banks Do not leave phones, tablets, or power banks in the rig or boat over winter. Their batteries especially dislike the cold and will degrade or drain if left to freeze for months. Bring them inside, and store any power bank around half charged, which is the kindest level for its battery over a long rest. Never leave phones, tablets, or power banks to freeze Their batteries degrade badly in long cold Bring them all indoors for the winter Store a power bank around half charged TIP Gather the small battery gadgets into one box and bring it inside. A power bank, a satellite messenger, a weather radio — they all keep best in a drawer at room temperature.

SATELLITE MESSENGER

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19. Satellite Messengers and Radios A Garmin inReach, a ZOLEO, a handheld VHF radio, or a weather radio all run on batteries that should not freeze. Bring them inside, and consider pausing the subscription on a satellite messenger if you will not use it until spring, to save the monthly fee. Charge them back up before the first trip. Bring satellite messengers and handheld radios indoors Their batteries should not sit frozen Consider pausing a messenger subscription for the off-season Charge them fully before the first spring trip My satellite messenger guide covers pausing those subscriptions. For winter, the gear itself just wants a warm shelf and a top-up charge before you head out again.

SOLAR PANELS 20. Solar Panels Over Winter Rooftop solar panels are built to stay out in the weather, so they do not come inside, but they do need a little thought. Snow piled on a panel stops it from charging and adds weight. A panel can still do useful work keeping a battery topped up over winter if you keep it clear of snow. Portable suitcase panels should be stored dry indoors. Rooftop panels stay out, built for the weather Snow on a panel stops it charging — brush it off A clear panel can keep a battery topped over winter Bring portable suitcase panels indoors, stored dry TIP If your rooftop solar keeps the batteries charged, leave it connected over winter and just keep the snow brushed off when you visit. My solar guide explains how it keeps a battery healthy through the off-season.

GENERATOR

14. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

21. The Generator and Power Station A portable power station has a big battery inside and should be stored indoors, around half charged, not left to freeze in the rig. A gas generator has its own fuel and oil care for winter that goes beyond tech, but keep its electronics dry. Both want a sheltered, dry home for the season. Store a portable power station indoors, around half charged Do not let its big battery freeze A gas generator has fuel and oil care beyond the tech Keep all of it dry and sheltered A portable power station is really a big battery with outlets, so it follows the same rules as any battery: store it charged partway, indoors, and not frozen. My power station guide covers it in full. BACK UP 22. Back Up Your Footage and Photos Before anything goes into storage, pull the memory cards from cameras and back up the footage and photos you want to keep. Cards can fail, and a long cold winter is not kind to them. Copying the files to a computer or a cloud folder means a dead card in the spring costs you nothing.

- 1 Pull the memory cards from dash cams and other cameras
- 2 Copy the footage and photos to a computer or cloud
- 3 Confirm the copies opened and are complete
- 4 Store the cards indoors, not in a frozen rig
- 5 Format the cards fresh in the spring TIP Make backing up the cards the first step of winterizing, before the gear is buried in a closet. It is the easiest thing to skip and the one you will most regret skipping if a card fails.

PASSWORDS**15. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

23. Write Down Logins and Settings Over a long winter it is easy to forget a Wi-Fi password, a camera login, or how a system was set up. Jot the important ones down, or keep them in a password keeper, before you put things away. A little record now saves a frustrating spring of locked-out gadgets. Note Wi-Fi passwords and camera logins before storage Keep them in a password keeper for safety Record any settings you fussed over Spring setup becomes a quick refresher, not a mystery My family password guide shows how to set up a keeper so no login is ever truly lost. Winter is a long time to forget how your router or cameras were set up. **MOISTURE** 24. Keeping Moisture Out Moisture is the quiet enemy of stored electronics. Damp air condenses on cold metal and glass, working into connectors and behind screens. Little packets that absorb moisture, and keeping gear in a dry spot, go a long way. A rig closed up tight with no airflow can grow surprisingly damp inside over winter. Damp air condenses on cold electronics Moisture creeps into connectors and behind screens Moisture-absorbing packets help in storage bins A sealed rig can grow damp inside over months **TIP** Toss a few moisture-absorbing packets in with stored gear and in the rig's cabinets. They are cheap and they soak up the damp that would otherwise settle on your electronics all winter.

CORDS**16. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

25. Cables, Cords and Connectors The cables and connectors are often where winter trouble hides. Coil cords loosely so they do not kink in the cold, keep connectors clean and dry, and protect any exposed plugs from moisture. A corroded or cracked connector is a classic cause of a gadget that will not work in the spring. Coil cords loosely, never in tight cold kinks Keep connectors clean and dry Cap or protect exposed plugs from moisture A corroded connector is a common spring failure Before you store a cable, a quick look for nicks or corrosion catches a problem while you can still fix it. A damaged cable found in the fall is an easy swap; found in the spring, it delays your first trip. PESTS 26. Keeping Mice Away From Wiring Mice love a stored rig for the winter, and they love to chew wiring, which can wreck your electrical system and your gadgets. Seal up the gaps they enter through, and use the deterrents that work for you. Damage from a winter of mice is one of the more expensive and avoidable surprises there is. Mice nest in stored rigs and chew wiring Chewed wires can wreck electrical systems Seal the gaps where they get in Use the mouse deterrents you trust WATCH OUT A single winter of mice can chew through wiring harnesses that cost a fortune to repair. Blocking their entry in the fall is far cheaper than fixing the damage in the spring.

TV AND ANTENNA

17. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

27. The TV, Antenna and Streaming Gear The rig's mounted TV can usually stay, but bring in the streaming sticks, remotes, and any tablet. Lower a crank-up antenna so snow and wind do not damage it. The small loose pieces of your TV setup keep best indoors, ready to plug back in come spring. The mounted TV can stay; bring in sticks and remotes Lower a crank-up antenna against snow and wind Bring in tablets used for watching Keep the small loose pieces indoors for spring TIP Dropping the antenna is easy to forget until a heavy snow bends it. Add 'lower the antenna' to your fall list. My RV TV guide covers the streaming gear you are bringing inside. SMART DEVICES 28. Smart Plugs, Speakers and Thermostats The little smart gadgets that make a rig homey, like a voice speaker, smart plugs, or a Bluetooth thermostat, are indoor-grade and should come inside for the winter. They are small, cheap to lose, and easy to gather in one box. Note how they were set up so reconnecting them in the spring is quick. Voice speakers and smart plugs come indoors They are indoor-grade and dislike the cold Gather them in one box for the season Note the setup for easy spring reconnection My RV Wi-Fi and smart devices guide covers setting these back up. For winter, just bring them in; they are the easiest things in the rig to pack away and the easiest to forget. THE RIG WIFI 29. The Router and Wi-Fi Gear A travel router and any Wi-Fi gear should come inside unless it is feeding winter security cameras. Power it down, note its settings or password, and store it dry. If it does stay to run cameras, make sure it is sheltered and the batteries feeding it are kept up.

TIP**18. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

Bring the travel router indoors unless it feeds winter cameras Note its settings and password before powering down Store it dry and at room temperature If it stays, keep it sheltered and powered If you are not running winter cameras, there is no reason to leave the router out in the cold. Bring it in, and it is ready to set up a strong network again on your first spring trip. BOAT STORAGE 30. The Boat's Own Winter Needs A boat has its electronics spread around: the sonar, the GPS, the trolling motor, the stereo, and the battery that runs them all. Whether it is shrink-wrapped, in a barn, or under a cover, pull the removable screens, bring the batteries somewhere powered, and protect the connections. The trolling motor's battery deserves the same care as the rig's. Pull removable screens and bring them in Bring the boat and trolling motor batteries to a powered spot Protect connections from moisture and corrosion Treat trolling motor batteries like any other for winter Boat batteries freeze and die over an Ohio winter just like rig batteries. If the boat sits where there is no power, carry the batteries inside and keep them on a maintainer until the lakes open up again. GPS TRACKER 31. Trackers That Keep Watching If you keep a GPS tracker on the rig or boat to guard against theft while it is stored, that is one gadget you want to leave running. Make sure its battery can last the winter or that it is wired to a battery you are maintaining, and that its subscription stays active. A tracker is only a watchman if it stays awake. A theft tracker should stay powered and active over winter Confirm its battery will last or it is wired to a maintained battery Keep its subscription active through the off-season A tracker only helps if it stays awake

TIP**19. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

Check your tracker now and then over the winter to be sure it is still reporting. My boat and trailer anti-theft guide covers keeping one running through a long storage stretch.

SENSORS 32. Tire and Tank Monitors The little monitoring gadgets get overlooked at winterizing time. A tire pressure monitor's display and its sensor caps, and a propane or tank sensor that reads a level over Bluetooth, all have small batteries that dislike the cold. Bring the displays indoors, and check whether the sensor caps want their batteries pulled for the off-season. Bring the tire monitor's display inside for the winter. Small sensor batteries weaken in long cold. Check whether sensor caps should have batteries removed. Tank and propane sensors follow the same rule. My RV monitoring apps guide covers these sensors in full. For winter, the display comes inside and the little sensor batteries get a thought, so they are ready to read true in the spring.

INVERTER 33. The Inverter and Shore Power Gear The inverter that makes household power from your batteries, and the converter that charges them from shore power, usually stay put, but they should be switched off so they do not quietly draw on the batteries all winter. Your surge protector or power management unit can come inside if it is a portable one, or stay if it is hardwired. Switch the inverter off so it does not drain the batteries. The converter can stay but should not sit working all winter. Bring a portable surge protector indoors; a hardwired one stays. Keep all of it dry and protected from moisture.

TIP My RV surge protector guide covers that gear in detail. For winter, the main thing is to cut any device that would keep sipping from the batteries you worked to charge and protect.

DRY RUN**20. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

34. A Final Check Before You Walk Away Before you lock up for the season, take one slow walk through the rig and boat with your fall list in hand. Confirm the batteries are charged and on the maintainer, the delicate gear is gathered and indoors, the paused plans are paused, and nothing you meant to bring in is still sitting out in the cold. This last look catches the one thing you forgot.

- 1** Walk through with your fall list in hand
- 2** Confirm the maintainer is plugged in and working

- 3 Check that every gadget you meant to bring in is inside
- 4 Confirm the paused plans are actually paused
- 5 Lock up knowing nothing was left to freeze The final walk-through is where you catch the tablet left in a drawer or the maintainer never plugged in. Five quiet minutes here saves a dead gadget come spring. CHECK INS 35. Checking In Over the Winter Winterizing is not quite set-and-forget. A quick check now and then through the cold months catches a problem while you can still act. Confirm the maintainer is working, glance at any cameras, brush snow off solar panels, and make sure nothing has gone dark. A few minutes a month is plenty.
- 6 Check that the battery maintainer is plugged in and working
- 7 Glance at any security cameras and the tracker
- 8 Brush snow off solar panels when you visit
- 9 Look for signs of moisture or mice
- 10 Note anything to fix before spring The point of a winter check-in is to catch a dead maintainer or a snowed-over panel before it quietly ruins a battery. A quick monthly look is cheap insurance on everything you put away.

LABELING

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36. Labeling and Keeping Track A winter is long enough to forget which cable went where and what you unplugged. Labeling the gear you store, bagging small parts together, and keeping your fall list handy turns spring from a scavenger hunt into a tidy checklist. The future you who unpacks in April will be grateful. Label stored gear and bag small parts together Keep screws and mounts with the gadget they belong to Hold on to your fall winterizing list Spring becomes a checklist, not a scavenger hunt TIP Keep each gadget's cables and mounting screws in a labeled bag with the device. Nothing delays a first spring trip like a fish finder with no bracket because the screws went missing over winter. SPRING WAKEUP 37. Waking Everything Up in Spring When the warm weekends return, waking the tech is simply your fall list run in reverse. Reinstall the gear you brought in, reconnect and charge the batteries, resume the plans you paused, and test everything before your first real trip. A little order in the fall makes this the easy, happy part.

- 1 Reinstall the screens, sticks, and gadgets you brought in
- 2 Reconnect the batteries and confirm they are charged
- 3 Resume any Starlink or messenger plans you paused
- 4 Reformat memory cards and test each camera

- 5 Run everything once before your first trip of the season Testing everything at home before the first trip means a dead battery or a glitchy screen is a driveway problem, not a ruined weekend. Give it all a dry run before you roll out.

TIMING

22. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

38. When to Winterize and When to Wake In Northeast Ohio, aim to winterize the tech before the first hard freeze, usually by late fall, so nothing gets caught by a surprise cold snap. In spring, wake things up once the deep freezes have passed, often by the time the lakes are opening. It is better to winterize a little early than a day too late. Winterize before the first hard freeze, usually late fall Do not wait for a surprise cold snap to catch you Wake things up once the deep freezes have passed Early is safe; late can cost you a battery TIP Pick a mild weekend in the fall to do the whole job in one go, well before the first hard freeze. Rushing it in the cold is how steps get skipped and batteries get forgotten.

COMMON MISTAKES 39. The Common Winterizing Mistakes A handful of mistakes cause most spring heartbreak. People leave a battery discharged. They forget the slow drain of always-on gadgets. They skip backing up a dash cam card. And they leave delicate electronics to freeze. Knowing these keeps you clear of the traps that cost the most. Leaving a battery discharged to freeze and crack Forgetting the slow drain of always-on devices Skipping the backup of camera footage Leaving delicate electronics out in the cold WATCH OUT The most expensive mistake is almost always the battery left run-down in the cold. If you are short on time, do the batteries first and come back for the rest.

COST**23. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech**

40. Keeping the Cost Sensible Winterizing the tech costs very little compared to replacing it. A maintainer and a few moisture packets are a small outlay, and bringing gear indoors is free. Weigh the modest cost of doing it right against a spring of dead batteries and ruined gadgets. Prices on a maintainer or a freeze sensor move around, so confirm current prices before you buy. A maintainer and packets cost little next to the gear they save Bringing gear indoors costs nothing but shelf space Doing it right beats replacing frozen batteries in spring Confirm current prices on any gear you add A battery maintainer pays for itself the first winter it saves a battery. It is the rare bit of gear that is almost always worth the modest cost for anyone storing a rig in the cold. COMMON WORRIES 41. The Questions People Ask Me Most When folks sit down to put the rig and boat to bed for an Ohio winter, the same questions come up. Here are the honest answers to the ones I hear most, so you can winterize with clear eyes and not miss the step that matters. 'Do I have to pull the batteries?' Only if there is no power for a maintainer where it sits 'Can Starlink stay out?' Only if powered and sheltered; most people pause and bring it in 'What is the one thing I must do?' Keep the batteries charged and from freezing 'When should I do it?' Before the first hard freeze, on a mild fall weekend If the whole list feels like a lot, start with the batteries and the gadgets that come indoors. Those two steps alone prevent most of the spring surprises I get called about. YOUR CHECKLIST 42. Your Winterizing Checklist Here is the short version to run through on a mild fall weekend. If you can check these off, everything you put away will wake up ready for the first warm trip of spring. Backed up all camera footage and photos

WHEN TO CALL

24. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

Batteries charged and on a maintainer, or pulled to a powered, warm spot Cut the slow drains with the battery cutoff or by disconnecting Brought all delicate electronics, phones, and power banks indoors Paused Starlink and messenger plans, or kept them for winter cameras Lowered the antenna and brought in streaming gear Protected connectors, added moisture packets, and blocked out mice Wrote down logins and kept my fall list for spring Tape this list inside a cabinet with your winterizing notes. Run it in reverse in the spring, and waking the rig becomes a tidy, happy morning instead of a string of surprises. 43.

When It Is Worth Calling Me Much of winterizing the tech you can do yourself on a free fall weekend. But if you are not sure which maintainer suits your batteries, if you want help pausing Starlink and setting up winter security cameras, or if you would simply rather have someone sit beside you and put the whole electrical and electronic side of the rig and boat to bed properly before the first freeze, that is exactly what I am here for. I will give you the honest answer, even when the honest answer is that you have already done the important parts yourself. I have more than thirty years of experience and have served Portage County since 2025. My first in-home visit is a flat ninety-nine dollars, I offer a thirty-day follow-up, and I can also help by remote screen share for less. TIP I can set up the right maintainer for your batteries, pause your Starlink and messenger plans, bring the delicate gear in, and set up winter cameras so you can watch the rig until spring — and give it all a spring wake-up too. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042. CHEAT SHEET Everyday Cheat Sheet Keep this page handy. It is the short answer to the questions folks ask most about winterizing the tech in an Ohio off-season. Keep batteries charged on a maintainer, above freezing; never store them run-down

25. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

No power at the spot? Pull the batteries to a warm, powered place or use a small solar panel Cut the slow drains with the battery cutoff switch or by disconnecting Bring delicate electronics, phones, tablets, and power banks indoors Pause Starlink and messenger plans, and bring the dish in unless it feeds winter cameras Back up all dash cam and camera footage before storage Add moisture packets, protect connectors, and block out mice Do it before the first hard freeze, and check in now and then over winter Get help: call Bill at (330) 200-8042

HOW I CAN HELP

26. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech

Your Visit — and My Promise In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included. Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo). My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated. Call or text (330) 200-8042 · Book a visit: billshometech.com/book · bill@billshometech.com This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

What Stays, What Comes In, What Gets Paused?

Three piles make winterizing simple.

Stays Out

Weather-rated and
mounted
Rooftop solar, keep it
clear
Security cameras if
watching

Comes Inside

Screens, sticks, tablets
Phones and power banks
Anything not
weather-rated

Gets Paused

Starlink Roam plan
Satellite messenger plan
Resume before spring

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Putting the Tech to Bed

A fall routine that pays off in spring.

- 1 Back up all camera footage
- 2 Charge batteries and set a maintainer
- 3 Cut the slow battery drains
- 4 Bring delicate gear indoors
- 5 Pause Starlink and messenger plans
- 6 Block out mice and check in over winter

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

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In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

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

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: **billshometech.com/book** · **bill@billshometech.com**

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