BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Home Solar: Panels, Inverters & Apps

Reading your solar app, batteries, Ohio bills and scams — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for solar homeowners and their families

Take your time — looking at the app can't break anything

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Enphase, SolarEdge & Tesla systems · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to living with home solar: what the panels and boxes on your house do, how to read the Enphase, SolarEdge or Tesla app on your phone, why production rises and falls through an Ohio year, what a home battery does in an outage, how net metering shows up on your bill, and how to spot the solar sales pitches and fake utility calls that target homeowners. Read it in any order and at your own pace. One rule runs through every chapter: the apps and Wi-Fi are yours to explore, but anything electrical belongs to your installer or a licensed electrician.

Part 1 — Getting Started

1 A Note from Bill
2 How Home Solar Works, in Plain English
3 Microinverters, Optimizers and String Inverters
4 Who Does What: You, Your Installer, Your Utility

Part 2 — Reading the Numbers

5 kW and kWh: The Two Numbers That Matter
6 Production, Consumption and the Grid
7 What Normal Looks Like: Ohio Seasons and Weather
8 When Production Drops: A Calm Checklist

Part 3 — The Enphase App

9 Getting Into the Enphase App
10 Reading the Enphase App
11 "Gateway Not Reporting": Back on Wi-Fi

Part 4 — The SolarEdge App

12 Getting Into mySolarEdge
13 Reading the mySolarEdge App
14 SolarEdge Offline: Back on Wi-Fi

Part 5 — The Tesla App: Solar and Powerwall

15 Tesla Solar and Powerwall in the Tesla App
16 Powerwall Settings: Backup Reserve and Modes
17 Powerwall Offline: Back on Wi-Fi

Part 6 — Batteries, Outages, Bills & Warranties

18 Home Batteries in Plain English
19 When the Power Goes Out
20 Getting the Most from Your Panels

21 Net Metering and Your Ohio Electric Bill
22 Warranties and Paperwork

Part 7 — Care and Troubleshooting

23 Cleaning, Snow and Roof Care
24 "Offline" or "No Data": Any Brand

Part 8 — Scams, Help and Your Cheat-Sheet

25 Solar Sales Pitches and "Free Solar" Scams
26 Fake Utility Calls, Texts and Emails
27 When to Call Bill
28 Your Home Solar Cheat-Sheet

PART 1

Getting Started

What the panels, inverters and boxes on your house actually do, which kind of system you have, and the simple line between what's yours to handle and what belongs to your installer. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Maybe you had solar panels put on your roof last spring and the installer handed you a phone app on the way out the door. Maybe you bought a house that already had them. Or maybe a son or daughter set it all up and now you're the one getting the emails that say "system not reporting." Whichever it is, this guide is for **you**.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years working with technology, and these days I help folks here in Portage County feel at home with theirs. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it at your kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, and without trying to sell you anything. When I use a word like "kilowatt-hour" or "inverter," I'll stop and explain it right then.

What this guide will do for you

- Explain what the panels, the inverter and the other boxes on your house do, in a few minutes.
- Teach you the two numbers that matter most — **kW** and **kWh** — so the app finally makes sense.
- Walk you through the three apps most Ohio homes use: the **Enphase App**, **mySolarEdge** and the **Tesla app**.
- Show you why production drops in winter, under snow and on cloudy days, and when a drop is worth a call.
- Help you get the system back online after a new router or a new internet provider — the most common "problem" of all.
- Explain home batteries, outages, net metering on your bill, warranties, and the solar scams to steer clear of.

The big promise: you can't break it by looking

Your solar app is a window, not a control panel. Opening it, tapping around, switching between the day and month views, reading the graphs — none of that changes anything on your roof. You can explore it as much as you like. Your system makes power on its own every sunny day whether or not you ever open the app.

STAY SAFE

My one firm rule in this guide

I'm a technology helper, not an electrician. Solar panels make electricity whenever light hits them, even when your power is out, and the wiring can be dangerous. So this guide never asks you to open a panel or box, touch wiring, flip breakers or disconnect switches, or climb on the roof. When something needs hands on the equipment, the right call is **your solar installer** or a **licensed electrician**. I'll say so plainly every time it comes up.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

Once you can read your app, you'll know at a glance whether your system is doing its job — and you'll stop worrying about the normal ups and downs. That peace of mind is worth a lot when you've made a big investment in your home.

I'm only a phone call away

If anything in this guide leaves you unsure, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. I'm glad to help with the app, the account and the Wi-Fi side. For anything electrical, I'll point you to the right person.

Let's start with the simplest question: how does sunlight turn into power for your toaster?

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

How Home Solar Works, in Plain English

A home solar system has only a few main parts. Once you can picture how energy moves from the roof to your kitchen — and sometimes out to the street — the app's pictures and graphs start to make sense.

The parts, roof to street

Part	What it does
Solar panels	The dark glass rectangles on your roof or in the yard. They turn sunlight into electricity. Light, not heat, is what they need — a cold, bright day can be a very good day.
Inverter	Panels make **DC** power, like a battery. Your home runs on **AC** power, like a wall outlet. The inverter converts one to the other. Your system has either one large inverter or many tiny ones (Chapter 3).
Gateway or monitoring device	A small box, often near your electrical panel, that collects the system's readings and sends them over your home internet to the app. Enphase calls it the **IQ Gateway** (older ones were called the **Envoy**); Tesla calls its version the **Gateway**.
Your electrical panel	The gray metal box with the breakers. Solar power flows in here and feeds your home. It's a box for electricians only.
Utility meter	The meter outside, from your electric company. With solar it counts power in *both* directions: what you buy from the grid and what you send back.
Home battery (optional)	Stores extra solar power for the evening or for an outage. Chapter 18 explains them.

Where the power goes, moment to moment

1. The sun shines and the panels make power.
2. The inverter turns it into household power.
3. Your home uses it first — the refrigerator, the furnace fan, the TV.
4. If the panels make **more** than the house is using right now, the extra goes to your battery (if you have one) or out through the meter to the grid.
5. If the house needs **more** than the panels are making — at night, or when the dryer runs — the rest comes from the battery or the grid, just as it did before you had solar.

All of that happens automatically, second by second. You don't switch anything over. Your lights don't flicker when a cloud passes; the grid simply fills in the difference.

GOOD TO KNOW

Most systems shut off when the power is out

A regular grid-connected solar system **without** a battery usually stops making power for your house during an outage, even in full sun. That's a safety design so it doesn't send power down the lines while utility crews are working on them. A home battery with backup is what changes that (Chapter 18 and Chapter 19). Ask your installer exactly what your system does.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

With this picture in your head, the app's animated arrows — sun to house, house to grid — stop being a mystery. You'll see your own home's story told in real time.

CHAPTER 3

Microinverters, Optimizers and String Inverters

The single biggest difference between solar systems is *how* the inverting is done. It decides which app you use, what you see in it, and who you call. You don't need to understand the electronics — just which kind you have.

The three common setups

	Microinverters	Inverter with optimizers	String inverter
Where the inverting happens	A small inverter under **each** panel	One wall-mounted inverter; a small "optimizer" under each panel	One wall-mounted inverter for the whole roof
Common brand in Ohio homes	Enphase	SolarEdge	Several, including Tesla's solar inverter
What the app can show	Each panel's output	Each panel's output (through the optimizers)	Usually the whole system, not each panel
If one panel is shaded	Only that panel drops	Only that panel drops	Can pull down a group of panels

How to tell which one you have

1. Look at your paperwork or contract from the installer. It usually lists the inverter brand and model.
2. Check which app the installer set up for you: Enphase, mySolarEdge or Tesla.
3. From the ground, look at the side of the house or garage near the electric meter. A single box about the size of a small suitcase, with a brand name on it, is often a central inverter. Look only — don't open it.
4. If you're still not sure, call your installer and ask, "What inverter brand and model do I have, and which app should I use?" Write the answer on the Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 28.

TIP

The plain-English words

A **microinverter** is a tiny inverter for one panel. An **optimizer** is a small box under a panel that tunes its output and reports on it, but leaves the inverting to the big box on the wall. A **string** is simply a group of panels wired together in a row.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing your system type tells you which chapters of this guide are yours: Part 3 for Enphase, Part 4 for SolarEdge, Part 5 for Tesla. You can skip the others with a clear conscience.

CHAPTER 4

Who Does What: You, Your Installer, Your Utility

Solar involves more people than most home technology. Knowing who handles what saves you phone calls — and keeps you safe.

Yours to handle (no tools needed)

- Opening the app, reading the numbers and the graphs (Part 2 through Part 5).
- Keeping your home Wi-Fi working, and reconnecting the system to Wi-Fi using the steps the app gives you (Chapter 11, Chapter 14 and Chapter 17).
- Changing settings that the app itself offers to owners, like a Powerwall's backup reserve (Chapter 16).
- Reading your electric bill and keeping your paperwork together (Chapter 21 and Chapter 22).
- Saying "no, thank you" to pushy salespeople and suspicious callers (Part 8).

Your installer's job

- Anything on the roof: panels, wiring, microinverters, optimizers, leaks around mounts.
- Anything inside the inverter, gateway, battery or electrical panel.
- Error codes or faults that the app says need service.
- Warranty claims for the equipment they installed (Chapter 22).
- Telling you where the system's shutoff switches are, and what they're for.

Your utility's job

- The meter, your bill, and the net metering arrangement (Chapter 21).
- Outages on the street and restoring power.

STAY SAFE

Shutoff switches and breakers

Most systems have a shutoff switch or rapid shutdown switch. Your installer should show you where it is and explain when emergency responders might use it. That's all you need to know about it. Don't flip breakers or switches to "reset" your solar — call your installer, and if you ever smell burning or see smoke or sparks, get out and call 911.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your installer has gone out of business

It happens. The equipment maker's support line (Enphase, SolarEdge or Tesla) can usually help you find another certified installer in the area. A licensed electrician can also help with electrical problems.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

When something seems off, you'll know in one breath whether it's a Wi-Fi job for you (or me), an equipment job for the installer, or a bill question for the utility.

PART 2

Reading the Numbers

kW and kWh, production and consumption, and what a normal Ohio year looks like — plus a calm checklist for the days your numbers drop.

CHAPTER 5

kW and kWh: The Two Numbers That Matter

Every solar app shows two kinds of numbers, and they're easy to mix up. One is about *right now*. The other is about *how much, over time*. Get these two straight and the rest of the app is easy.

kW: how fast, right now

A **kilowatt** (kW) is 1,000 watts. It tells you how much power is flowing *at this moment* — like the speedometer in your car. When the app says your panels are making **3.2 kW**, that's the rate at this instant. It changes all day as the sun moves and clouds pass.

kWh: how much, over time

A **kilowatt-hour** (kWh) is an amount of energy — like the odometer, or the gallons in the tank. Making 1 kW for one hour gives you 1 kWh. Your electric bill charges you by the kWh, and your app's daily, monthly and lifetime totals are in kWh.

You'll see	What it means
kW (kilowatts)	The rate **right now**. Look for it on the live or "now" screen.
kWh (kilowatt-hours)	The amount **over a day, month or year**. Look for it on history graphs and your bill.
MWh (megawatt-hours)	1,000 kWh. Some apps show lifetime totals this way.
System size (kW)	The size printed on your contract, such as "8.4 kW." It's the most the panels could make in ideal test conditions. Real-world output is usually lower.

TIP

A handy way to remember

kW is the **speed**. kWh is the **distance**. Your bill, like a road trip, cares about distance.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why your system rarely hits its "size"

An 8 kW system almost never shows 8 kW in the app. Heat, the angle of the sun, wiring and inverter losses all take a little. Seeing a peak somewhat below the system size on a bright day is normal. Your installer can tell you what peak to expect from your roof.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You'll read your app correctly the first time, and you'll be able to compare it with your electric bill without getting tangled in the units.

CHAPTER 6

Production, Consumption and the Grid

Your app may show up to four flows of energy. Here's what each one means and why some homes see only one of them.

Label	Meaning
Production (Solar)	What your panels made.
Consumption (Home)	What your house used, from any source.
Grid import	What you bought from the electric company.
Grid export	Extra solar you sent out to the grid. Your utility credits it (Chapter 21).
Battery	What went into or came out of your home battery, if you have one.
Net	Production minus consumption. A positive net means you made more than you used.

Why you might see production only

To show how much your *house* uses, the system needs extra measuring sensors installed in your electrical panel, usually called **consumption meters** or **CTs** (current transformers). Some systems were installed without them. In that case, the app shows what the panels made but not what the house used. Adding consumption monitoring is an installer job, done inside the panel.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not sure whether you have consumption monitoring?

If your app shows only a solar or production number and never a "home" or "consumption" number, you probably don't have it. Ask your installer whether it was included and what adding it would involve. It's their job, not yours.

Reading a day, start to finish

1. Open your app and switch to the **Day** view for a sunny day.
2. Find the production curve: it rises in the morning, peaks around midday, and falls in the evening, like a hill.
3. If you have consumption, find the home-use line. Spikes are big appliances — the dryer, the oven, a heat pump.

4. Where production is above consumption, you were exporting. Where it's below, you were importing.
5. Switch to the **Month** view to see the totals add up in kWh.

TIP

Compare with your bill, not with your neighbor

Every roof is different: direction, tilt, trees and size. The most useful comparison is your system this month against your system the same month last year.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing the difference between production and consumption helps you spot real savings — like running the dishwasher or dryer midday when the panels are covering it.

CHAPTER 7

What Normal Looks Like: Ohio Seasons and Weather

Here in Northeast Ohio we get long summer days, gray Novembers, lake-effect clouds and real snow. Your solar production follows all of it. Most of the "drops" folks worry about are simply the weather and the season.

The seasons

- **Late spring and summer** are your biggest months: long days and a high sun.
- **Fall** production slides as days shorten and the sun sits lower in the sky.
- **December and January** are usually the smallest months by far — short days, low sun, frequent clouds and snow. A winter month that's a fraction of a summer month is normal.
- **Cold and bright** is good for panels. A crisp, clear February day can produce surprisingly well.

Weather and surroundings

Cause	What it does
Clouds	Heavy overcast can cut production to a small fraction of a sunny day. Thin clouds cut it less. The panels still make some power.
Snow	Panels covered in snow make little or nothing until it slides or melts off. That's expected.
Shade	Trees, a chimney or a neighbor's new addition can shade part of the roof. Shade changes with the seasons as the sun moves lower in winter, and as trees leaf out in spring.
Heat	Very hot days slightly lower panel efficiency. A hot July day may peak a little below a cool May day.
Dirt and pollen	Usually a small effect. Rain does most of the cleaning (Chapter 23).

STAY SAFE

Snow on the panels: let it be

Snow covering the panels for a few days is normal, and production comes back when it slides or melts off. Please don't climb a ladder, go on the roof, or reach up with a shovel or rake to clear them. A fall from an icy ladder is a far bigger risk than a few lost kilowatt-hours, and tools can scratch the glass. If snow worries you, ask your installer what they recommend for your roof.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once you know the shape of an Ohio solar year, a low week in December won't send you to the phone. You'll save your worry for the things that really need attention.

CHAPTER 8

When Production Drops: A Calm Checklist

Something looks off in the app. Before you call anyone, take five minutes with this list. Most of the time, the answer is one of the first three items.

Work through it in order

1. **Check the weather.** Was today cloudy, rainy or snowy? Look out the window at the roof from the ground.
2. **Check the date.** Is it late fall or winter? Compare with the same month last year, not with July.
3. **Check whether the app is showing data at all.** If the numbers stopped completely, or the app says "not reporting," "offline" or "device offline," that's almost always a Wi-Fi or internet problem — not a solar problem. Go to Chapter 24.
4. **Check for a single panel.** On Enphase and SolarEdge, the panel view can show one panel at zero while the rest are working. Note which one and call your installer.
5. **Check for an alert.** Read any message in the app. Write down the exact words or take a screenshot.
6. **Check for a power outage.** Systems without a battery usually stop during an outage (Chapter 2).
7. **Still a big drop on a sunny day?** Call your installer, and tell them what you found.

STAY SAFE

What not to do

Don't climb onto the roof, open the inverter or gateway, or flip breakers and switches to see if it helps. Solar wiring can carry power even when the house power is off. Equipment faults are a job for your installer or a licensed electrician.

TIP

What to tell the installer

Have this ready: your system's brand and size, the date the drop started, a screenshot of the app, any alert wording, and whether it's one panel or the whole system. You'll get a faster, clearer answer.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

This checklist turns a worried phone call into a calm, useful one — or saves the call altogether.

PART 3

The Enphase App

For homes with Enphase microinverters: getting signed in, reading Live Status and your history, and getting the IQ Gateway back online after a Wi-Fi change.

CHAPTER 9

Getting Into the Enphase App

If your system uses Enphase microinverters, your monitoring lives in Enphase's homeowner app. It shows how your system is performing right now and over time, down to each solar panel.

A note on the name

For years the app and website were called **Enlighten** (or **MyEnlighten**). Enphase's current materials call it the **Enphase App**. You'll still see the Enlighten name in older emails, on some web pages and in instructions your installer gave you. It's the same account and the same sign-in.

Getting signed in

1. Look for an email from Enphase, sent when your system was activated. It invites you to set a password. Check your spam or junk folder if you can't find it.
2. On your phone, open the **App Store** (iPhone) or **Google Play** (Android) and search for **Enphase**. Install the app published by **Enphase Energy**.
3. Open it and sign in with the email address your installer used for your system.
4. If you've forgotten the password, use the app's forgot-password link and follow the email.
5. If no account exists in your name, call your installer. They set up the account and can add you, or send a new invitation.

TIP

Bought a house that already has Enphase?

The account is probably still in the previous owner's name. Contact Enphase support or the original installer about transferring the system to you. Have your closing date and address ready.

HEADS UP

Use only the official app

Install the app from Enphase Energy in your phone's app store. Don't sign in through links in unexpected texts or emails; open the app yourself instead (Chapter 26).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once you're signed in, you can check your whole system in a few seconds from anywhere — the porch, the doctor's waiting room, or a winter trip south.

CHAPTER 10

Reading the Enphase App

Enphase's homeowner app focuses on three things: how the system is doing right now, how it did over time, and how each panel is doing. Screens change a little with app updates, but these ideas stay the same.

Live Status: right now

Live Status shows the current flow of energy in your home: what the panels are making, and — if you have consumption monitoring — what the house is using and whether you're drawing from or sending to the grid. Numbers here are in **kW** (Chapter 5).

History: days, months, years

1. From the main screen, look for your energy totals for today. These are in **kWh**.
2. Switch between day, week, month and year views to see how production adds up.
3. Compare this month with the same month last year to see whether things are on track (Chapter 7).
4. If you have consumption monitoring, compare what you made with what you used.

Panel by panel

Because each Enphase panel has its own microinverter, the app can show each panel's output on a picture of your roof. Panels in afternoon shade will look lower late in the day; that's normal. A single panel that shows nothing on a sunny day while the others are producing is worth a call to your installer.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **If a number looks odd**
>
> Give it a few minutes, close the app and open it again before you worry. A single strange reading is usually just a moment's delay in the data, not a problem on the roof.

TIP

Notifications

Look in the app's settings or your account settings for notification options, and turn on alerts for problems like a gateway that stops reporting. That way you'll hear about an outage of data without checking every day.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The panel view gives you something most homeowners never had: a way to see a problem on the roof without climbing a ladder.

CHAPTER 11

"Gateway Not Reporting": Back on Wi-Fi

The most common Enphase message of all is that your **IQ Gateway** is not reporting. It sounds alarming, but Enphase says this usually happens after a change to your internet: a new internet provider, a new Wi-Fi password, or a new Wi-Fi network name. Your panels are almost always still making power. The gateway just can't send the readings to the app.

First, the simple checks

1. Is your home internet working? Check on a phone or computer connected to your Wi-Fi.
2. Did anything change recently — a new router, a technician visit, a new password? That's your likely answer.
3. If your router was just restarted, give everything 15 to 30 minutes to reconnect on its own.

Reconnecting the gateway with the app

Enphase points homeowners to the reconnection steps inside the Enphase App, so follow the app's own screens. Menu names shift a little between app versions. Here's what to expect:

1. Have your Wi-Fi network name and password written down in front of you.
2. Stand close to the IQ Gateway with your phone — Enphase suggests within about 10 feet (3 meters).
3. Open the Enphase App. In recent versions, the steps are under **Menu** > **Settings** > **Connectivity**, then **Configure Wi-Fi**. If yours looks different, look for the gateway's Wi-Fi or connectivity steps.
4. The app may ask your phone to join the gateway's own small Wi-Fi network for a moment. Its name includes the last six digits of the gateway's serial number. Then you return to the app.
5. Choose your home network and type the password carefully. Capital letters matter.
6. When the app says it's connected, give it time. Enphase notes the "not reporting" notice can take up to about 30 minutes to clear.

STAY SAFE

If the app asks you to do something at the gateway

Some reconnection paths involve a button on the gateway, and Enphase suggests restarting the gateway once if the steps keep failing. Only press a button the official app or Enphase support tells you to press. Don't open the gateway cover, unplug wiring or flip breakers. If a restart would mean touching a breaker, that's a call to your installer or Enphase support, not a job for you.

TIP

A new router doesn't have to mean a call

If you're getting a new router, you can save trouble by giving it the **same** network name and password as the old one. Many devices, including some gateways, then reconnect on their own. Chapter 24 has more.

FROM BILL

Happy to help with the Wi-Fi side

Reconnecting a gateway after a new router is exactly the kind of job I help with: $49 remote · $99 in your home. Anything electrical goes to your installer.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Most "my solar stopped" worries end right here, with a Wi-Fi password and five minutes.

PART 4

The SolarEdge App

For homes with a SolarEdge inverter and optimizers: the mySolarEdge app, what SolarEdge ONE means, reading your numbers, and getting the inverter back on Wi-Fi.

CHAPTER 12

Getting Into mySolarEdge

If your installer put in a SolarEdge inverter, usually a gray or white box on an outside or garage wall, with small optimizers under the panels, your homeowner app is **mySolarEdge**.

Which SolarEdge app is the right one?

Name you may see	What it is
mySolarEdge	The homeowner app. This is the one to install. It shows your production, your home's use if you have consumption monitoring, a SolarEdge battery if you have one, and SolarEdge smart devices.
SolarEdge Monitoring (older app)	The older app. SolarEdge has been moving homeowners off it and onto mySolarEdge. If you still have it, switch.
SolarEdge ONE	Not a separate app for you to find. It's SolarEdge's name for its energy-management system, which decides automatically when to use solar, battery or grid. Homeowners see and control its features through mySolarEdge.
Installer setup apps	Tools installers use during installation. You don't need them.

Getting signed in

1. Look for an email from SolarEdge or your installer inviting you to set up your account. Check spam or junk if you can't find it.
2. In the **App Store** or **Google Play**, search for **mySolarEdge**. Install the app published by SolarEdge.
3. Open it and sign in with the email address your installer registered. If you've never had a password, use the app's sign-up or forgot-password option with that same email.
4. If the app says there's no system linked to your email, call your installer. They can add you as the owner.

TIP

Bought a home with SolarEdge already on it?

The monitoring account may still belong to the previous owner or to the original installer. Ask the installer or SolarEdge to transfer the site to you. Have the inverter's serial number ready: it's printed on a label on the side of the inverter, which you can read without opening anything. A photo from a step away works well.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

With the right app and your own login, you can check the system from your phone and get alerts in your own name, instead of relying on the previous owner or a salesperson.

CHAPTER 13

Reading the mySolarEdge App

mySolarEdge opens on a picture of your home's energy: where it's coming from and where it's going right now. Below that are your totals and history. Screens change with updates, but the ideas stay the same.

The main screen

- **Solar**: what the panels are making right now, in **kW**.
- **Home**: what the house is using, if your system has consumption monitoring (Chapter 6).
- **Grid**: whether you're buying from the grid or sending extra out.
- **Battery**: if you have a SolarEdge battery, how full it is and whether it's charging or discharging.
- Animated lines show the direction power is flowing between them.

Looking back at your history

1. Tap the energy or history area to open the graphs.
2. Switch between day, week, month and year. Totals are in **kWh**.
3. Pick the same month from last year to compare like with like (Chapter 7).
4. If you have consumption monitoring, look at how much of what you used came from your own panels.

Panel by panel

Because each panel has an optimizer, SolarEdge can show each panel's output on a layout of your roof, if your installer set that layout up. A panel in morning or afternoon shade will look lower at those times. One panel that stays at zero on a bright day while its neighbors are working is worth a call to your installer.

> **TIP**
>
> **Turn on notifications**
>
> When your phone asks whether mySolarEdge may send notifications, say yes. That way you'll hear about a communication problem or an alert without opening the app every day.

GOOD TO KNOW

SolarEdge ONE features

Newer SolarEdge systems with a battery and smart devices may show SolarEdge ONE features, such as automatic battery decisions or EV charger control, inside mySolarEdge. What you see depends on the equipment you have. If you're not sure what's switched on, ask your installer.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A minute with the main screen tells you whether the sun is paying for what you're running right now — handy when you're deciding whether to start the dryer.

CHAPTER 14

SolarEdge Offline: Back on Wi-Fi

If mySolarEdge suddenly shows no new data, or says the system isn't communicating, the most common reason is a change to your home internet: a new router or modem, a new provider, or a new Wi-Fi password. The panels keep making power; the inverter just can't report it.

First, the simple checks

1. Is your internet working on your phone or computer at home?
2. Did anything change recently — a new router, a technician visit, a new password?
3. If the router was just restarted, give everything 15 to 30 minutes to reconnect.

Reconnecting with the app

Installers' help pages describe a reconnection path inside mySolarEdge for many inverters. Your screens may differ by model, so follow what the app shows you.

1. Write down your Wi-Fi network name and password.
2. Stand near the inverter with your phone.
3. In mySolarEdge, look for the inverter communication or Wi-Fi option.
4. The app may ask your phone to join the inverter's own temporary Wi-Fi network. Allow it.
5. Tap **Configure** (or similar), choose your home network, type the password and tap **Join**.
6. The inverter should then reconnect to your home Wi-Fi. Give the data time to start flowing again.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **2.4 GHz Wi-Fi**
>
> Installer guides say SolarEdge inverters use the **2.4 GHz** Wi-Fi band. Many routers broadcast 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz under one name, which usually works fine. If it won't connect, your router may need a separate 2.4 GHz network name. That's a router setting, and it's the kind of thing I help with.

STAY SAFE

If the steps point you to the inverter's switch

Some SolarEdge inverters have a switch or button on the box itself that's used during setup. Because that switch also turns the inverter on and off, I'd rather you not touch it on your own. If the app's steps lead there, stop and call your installer or SolarEdge support; they can walk you through it or do it for you. Never open the inverter or touch its wiring.

TIP

What to have when you call SolarEdge or your installer

Your router's brand and model, your inverter's serial number (from the label, read from a step away), when the data stopped, and anything that changed with your internet around then.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Most "SolarEdge stopped working" scares are really "my Wi-Fi changed." Knowing that saves you a worried evening and, often, a service call.

PART 5

The Tesla App: Solar and Powerwall

For homes with Tesla solar or a Tesla Powerwall: reading the energy screen, the few owner settings that matter, and getting the Powerwall back online.

CHAPTER 15

Tesla Solar and Powerwall in the Tesla App

Tesla uses one app for everything it makes: cars, solar and Powerwall batteries. If you have Tesla solar or a Powerwall, your home shows up in the **Tesla** app as an **energy site**. You don't need to own a Tesla car.

Getting signed in

1. In the **App Store** or **Google Play**, search for **Tesla** and install the app published by Tesla.
2. Sign in with the Tesla account your system was registered to. Often that's the email you gave the installer or Tesla when you ordered.
3. If you forgot the password, use the app's forgot-password option.
4. If you sign in and don't see your home, the system may be under someone else's account. Call your installer or Tesla support to have it added to yours.

The energy home screen

Open the app and choose your home if you have more than one Tesla product. The energy screen shows a picture of your home with power flowing between four places:

Tile	What it shows
Solar	What your panels are making right now, in kW.
Powerwall	How full the battery is (as a percentage) and whether it's charging or powering the house.
Home	What your house is using right now.
Grid	Whether you're buying power or sending extra out. During an outage, it shows the grid is down.

Tap the tiles or the history area to see totals for the day, week, month and year in kWh. As with any solar app, compare a month with the same month last year (Chapter 7).

HEADS UP

Tesla texts and emails

Be careful with messages that claim to be from Tesla and ask you to sign in, pay, or "confirm" your account from a link. Open the Tesla app yourself instead. Chapter 26 covers these.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One glance tells you how full your Powerwall is and whether the sun is covering your home — the two things that matter most before a storm.

CHAPTER 16

Powerwall Settings: Backup Reserve and Modes

The Tesla app gives owners a few settings for the Powerwall. These are owner-safe: they're made to be changed from your phone, and you can change them back any time. The most important one is the **Backup Reserve**.

Backup Reserve, in plain English

Your Powerwall's stored energy is split into two portions. The **Backup Reserve** is the part kept aside for an outage. The rest is used day to day by the mode you've chosen, for example to run the house in the evening on stored solar. A higher reserve means more saved for an outage and less used for everyday savings.

Changing the Backup Reserve

1. Open the Tesla app and go to your energy home screen.
2. Tap **Settings**, then **Powerwall**.
3. Move the **Backup Reserve** slider to the percentage you want.
4. Leave the screen. The change takes effect on its own.

GOOD TO KNOW

What Tesla says about the numbers

Tesla shows a "Low Backup Reserve" indicator if you set the reserve below 20 percent, because there may not be enough energy for a long outage. Setting it to 100 percent keeps the battery full for outages but stops the everyday modes from using it, so you lean more on the grid. Tesla also suggests raising the reserve ahead of an expected outage if Storm Watch hasn't already kicked in.

The everyday modes

Setting	What it does
Self-Powered	Stores extra solar during the day and uses it to power the house later, so you buy less from the grid.
Time-Based Control	Uses the battery around your utility's rate schedule, if your electric plan charges different prices at different times of day. If your plan charges the same price all day, ask your installer whether this mode does anything for you.
Storm Watch	When severe weather is forecast for your area, the Powerwall charges up so it's ready for an outage. You can turn it on in the app's settings. The Easier chapter shows how.

STAY SAFE

Settings in the app only

Everything in this chapter happens on your phone. Don't turn the Powerwall's own switch off or on, or flip any breaker, to "reset" it. If the app shows a fault or says the Powerwall needs service, call your installer or Tesla support.

TIP

Not sure what to choose?

If outages worry you more than the last few dollars of savings, a higher reserve is a perfectly sensible choice. If you rarely lose power, a lower reserve may save more. There's no wrong answer, and you can change it any time.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One slider lets you decide how much of your battery is saved for a storm, instead of leaving it to a default you never chose.

CHAPTER 17

Powerwall Offline: Back on Wi-Fi

If the Tesla app says your Powerwall or Gateway is **offline** or shows old numbers, the usual cause is the same as with other brands: a new router, a new provider or a new Wi-Fi password. The battery and solar keep working; the app just can't hear from them.

First, the simple checks

1. Is your home internet working on your phone or computer?
2. Did anything change recently with your Wi-Fi or internet provider?
3. If you just restarted the router, wait 15 to 30 minutes. Systems often reconnect on their own.

Reconnecting with the Tesla app

Tesla's steps differ a little by equipment. Follow what your app shows you.

1. Write down your home Wi-Fi name and password.
2. Stand near the Powerwall and Gateway with your phone, unless your system still has a cellular or wired connection (then the app may let you do this from anywhere).
3. Open the Tesla app and choose your home energy site.
4. For Powerwall 3, Tesla says you can tap **Device Offline** on the energy home screen. For other systems, go to **Settings** and tap **Configure Wi-Fi** near the bottom.
5. If the app asks your phone to join a Wi-Fi network starting with **TEG-**, accept it. That's the system's own short-range network.
6. Choose your home network, type the password and connect. Tesla says it may take up to five minutes.

GOOD TO KNOW

2.4 GHz and signal strength

Tesla's troubleshooting notes say Powerwall connects to **2.4 GHz** Wi-Fi, not 5 GHz, and that the signal where the equipment sits should be at least two or three bars. A garage or basement far from the router can be the real problem. A Wi-Fi extender or mesh system near the equipment often fixes it — that's a Wi-Fi job, not an electrical one.

STAY SAFE

What not to do

Tesla's own troubleshooting mentions resetting the Gateway or Powerwall if the steps fail. Leave that to your installer or Tesla support unless the app itself walks you through it on screen. Don't open the Gateway, flip breakers or turn the Powerwall's switch off and on.

FROM BILL

The Wi-Fi side is my side

Weak Wi-Fi in the garage, a new router, a mesh system that won't play nicely — I'm glad to sort those out so your Powerwall stays online. $49 remote · $99 in your home.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Keeping the Powerwall online means the app can show you what's happening at home, and features like Storm Watch can do their job.

PART 6

Batteries, Outages, Bills & Warranties

What a home battery does, what really happens when the power goes out, getting more from your panels, net metering on an Ohio bill, and keeping your warranty paperwork together.

CHAPTER 18

Home Batteries in Plain English

A home battery is a large rechargeable battery mounted on a wall or the floor, usually in the garage or basement. Tesla's is the **Powerwall**; Enphase and SolarEdge make their own batteries too. It does two jobs.

Job one: saving solar for later

On a sunny day your panels often make more than the house is using. A battery stores that extra and lets the house use it in the evening, instead of sending it all out to the grid.

Job two: backup in an outage

If your system was installed with backup, the battery can keep some or all of your home running when the grid goes down, and on many systems the panels can recharge it during the day while the outage lasts. Without a battery set up for backup, most solar systems shut off in an outage (Chapter 2).

The numbers that describe a battery

Term	Meaning
Capacity (kWh)	How much energy it holds — the size of the tank. More kWh, longer backup.
Power (kW)	How much it can deliver at once. This decides how many big things it can run together, like a well pump and a microwave.
State of charge (%)	How full it is right now. The app shows this.
Backup reserve (%)	The part saved for outages (Chapter 16).

Whole-home or some circuits?

Some installations back up the whole house. Others back up only certain circuits — often the refrigerator, furnace fan, some lights and outlets, the internet — on a separate small panel. This was decided when the system was designed, and it's the most important thing to know before an outage. Ask your installer, and write the answer on your Cheat-Sheet (Chapter 28).

HEADS UP

Adding a battery later

Adding a battery to an existing solar system is an electrical project with permits, utility paperwork and costs that vary a lot. Get more than one written quote from licensed installers, and be wary of anyone who pressures you to sign the same day (Chapter 25).

GOOD TO KNOW

Portable power stations are different

A portable power station is a smaller battery you plug things into directly. It isn't wired to the house. Our separate Portable Power Stations guide covers those.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing what your battery backs up, and for roughly how long, lets you plan an outage calmly instead of guessing in the dark.

CHAPTER 19

When the Power Goes Out

What happens in an outage depends entirely on whether you have a battery set up for backup. Here's what to expect, and what to do.

If you have solar but no battery

- Your solar system usually shuts off, even in bright sun. That's a safety design to protect line workers.
- When the grid comes back, the system restarts on its own after a short wait. You don't need to do anything.
- Report the outage to your electric company as usual.

If you have a battery with backup

1. The battery takes over by itself. Many homes barely notice; on some, the lights blink.
2. Open your app. It should show the grid as down and the battery powering the home.
3. Check the battery percentage, and look at the home-use number to see how fast you're using it.
4. Go easy on big users that aren't essential: the electric oven, the dryer, space heaters, an electric car charger. The battery lasts much longer that way.
5. On sunny days, many systems recharge the battery from the panels during the outage. Cloudy or snowy days won't add much.
6. Report the outage to your electric company — your battery doesn't tell them.

STAY SAFE

Generators and solar batteries

Never plug a portable generator into a wall outlet or try to connect one to the house yourself. Connecting a generator to a home with solar and batteries needs equipment and a design a licensed electrician or your installer has approved. Run any generator outdoors, far from windows and doors. Our Home Generators & Transfer Switches guide has more.

TIP

Your app may need the internet

If your internet modem and router aren't on backed-up circuits, your phone may not be able to see the system from home during an outage. Using cell data instead of Wi-Fi usually helps — if the system itself is still online through another connection. Don't worry if the app goes quiet; the battery still works.

GOOD TO KNOW

Medical equipment

If someone at home depends on oxygen, a CPAP or other powered medical equipment, don't count on solar or a battery alone. Ask your doctor and your electric company about their programs for customers who rely on medical equipment, and have a backup plan.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing what to expect means an outage is an inconvenience, not a crisis — and you'll make the battery last.

CHAPTER 20

Getting the Most from Your Panels

You don't need to change your life around your solar. A few easy habits, guided by your app, help you use more of your own power.

Small habits that help

- **Run big appliances when the sun's up.** On a sunny day, start the dishwasher, washing machine or dryer late morning to mid-afternoon, when the panels are near their peak.
- **Look before you start.** Open the app's live screen. If Solar is well above Home, you've got power to spare.
- **Use delay-start buttons.** Many dishwashers and washers have them. Set them to finish in the early afternoon.
- **Keep trees trimmed.** If branches have grown to shade the panels, call a tree service for anything near the roof or power lines. Don't climb up yourself.
- **Keep the monitoring online.** Your app can only warn you of problems if it can report (Chapter 24).

A simple monthly check

1. Once a month, open your app and switch to the month view.
2. Compare this month's production with the same month last year.
3. If it's close, you're done. If it's well below on a month with similar weather, look for a single panel at zero or an alert, then call your installer (Chapter 8).
4. Write the month's kWh on a calendar if you like. Over a year or two you'll know your system's rhythm.

TIP

Don't chase every kilowatt-hour

Whether you save a little more by shifting a load depends on how your utility credits extra solar (Chapter 21). The monthly check matters more than any single habit.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Five minutes a month tells you the system is healthy, so you can stop wondering and enjoy it.

CHAPTER 21

Net Metering and Your Ohio Electric Bill

When your panels make more than the house is using, the extra goes out to the grid. **Net metering** is the arrangement where your electric company gives you credit for it. Here's the general picture in Ohio. The exact terms are set by your own utility, so treat this as a starting point, not the final word.

The general Ohio picture

- Under rules from the **Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO)**, the state's regulated electric utilities must offer a net metering arrangement to customers with their own solar, even if you buy your generation from a competitive supplier.
- The system has to be at your home and sized mainly to cover your own use.
- Your meter must be able to count power in both directions; the utility handles the meter.
- Under the current PUCO rules, credit for extra power you send out is based on the **energy-only** part of the utility's standard price, not the full price per kWh you pay. So a kWh you send out is usually worth less on your bill than a kWh you avoid buying.
- That credit is applied to your bill and can carry forward from month to month.

GOOD TO KNOW

Rules can change, and your utility has the details

Net metering rules have been revised and challenged more than once in Ohio. If you get your power from a co-op or a city-owned utility, it sets its own policy. Call the customer service number on your bill and ask for their net metering or customer-generator information.

Reading your bill

1. Find the meter readings or usage section. A net-metered bill often shows power **delivered** to you and power **received** from you, or a single net number.
2. Look for a line about a net metering or generation **credit**, and any credit carried forward.
3. Compare the bill's numbers with your app's grid import and export for the same dates, if your app shows them. They won't match exactly, because billing periods and meter readings differ, but they should be in the same neighborhood.
4. If something seems far off, call your utility first. They own the meter and the bill.

HEADS UP

Why summer can help winter

Because credits may carry forward, a big summer can help with smaller winter months. Ask your utility how long credits carry and what happens to any left over at the end of their cycle.

STAY SAFE

Not financial or legal advice

I'm explaining the general idea so your bill makes sense. For questions about tax credits, loans, leases or contracts, talk with a tax professional, your lender or an attorney.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Understanding net metering explains why using your own solar at midday often saves more than sending it out, and why your bill doesn't drop to zero even in a great month.

CHAPTER 22

Warranties and Paperwork

A solar system is meant to last a long time, and so are its warranties. The trouble is that the paperwork gets scattered. Here's what to gather, once, so you can find it on the day you need it.

The kinds of warranty you may have

Warranty	What it covers
Panel product warranty	Covers defects in the panels themselves.
Panel performance warranty	Promises the panels will still produce a stated share of their original output after a number of years.
Inverter / microinverter / optimizer	From Enphase, SolarEdge, Tesla or another maker. Lengths vary by product and date.
Battery	Often stated in years and a minimum remaining capacity.
Installer workmanship	From the company that installed it: covers their work, like roof penetrations, leaks and wiring. Length varies a lot between companies.

Exact lengths and terms depend on your specific equipment and contract, so read your own documents rather than going by what a neighbor or an ad says.

Build your solar folder

1. Find the contract or purchase agreement, and the final invoice.
2. Find the warranty documents for panels, inverter(s), battery and the installer's workmanship warranty.
3. Write down the installer's name, phone number and website, and the date the system was turned on.
4. Note the equipment brands and model numbers. Your app's settings or system information screen often lists them.
5. Keep any permit, inspection or utility approval letters.
6. Put it all in one folder, paper or digital, and tell a family member where it is.

TIP

If you sell the house

Buyers will ask about the system, its warranties and its monitoring account. Having the folder ready makes that easy. If you have a lease or loan, read its transfer terms early, and talk to the company holding it.

HEADS UP

Don't void your warranty

Having someone other than a qualified installer work on the system, or opening equipment yourself, can put a warranty at risk. Another good reason to leave the equipment to the pros.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

When something does fail, one phone call with the right paperwork in hand can get it fixed under warranty instead of at your expense.

PART 7

Care and Troubleshooting

Cleaning, snow and roof care without a ladder, and a brand-by-brand plan for the most common message of all: "offline" or "no data."

CHAPTER 23

Cleaning, Snow and Roof Care

Solar panels need very little care. In Ohio, rain and snowmelt do most of the cleaning. The main thing you need to know is what *not* to do.

Cleaning

- A little dust or pollen usually costs only a small amount of production. Rain rinses most of it off.
- If your monthly check (Chapter 20) shows a real drop and you can see heavy dirt, bird droppings or leaves from the ground, call your installer and ask whether cleaning is worth it and who they recommend.
- Ask before hiring any cleaning service. Some cleaning methods, chemicals or pressure washers can damage panels or affect the warranty (Chapter 22).

Snow

- Snow-covered panels make little or nothing. That's normal and temporary.
- Panels are dark and slick, so snow often slides off within a day or two of sunshine.
- Snow sliding off can land in a heap below the roof edge. Keep walkways and parked cars out of the way.

STAY SAFE

Stay off the roof and off the ladder

Please don't climb on the roof, go up a ladder, or use a roof rake, hose or brush to reach the panels. Roofs are slippery, panels carry electricity whenever light hits them, and falls are a serious risk at any age. Everything on the roof is a job for your installer or a professional they recommend.

What to watch for, from the ground

If you see	What to do
A loose or sagging panel, or a hanging wire	Keep people away and call your installer right away.
A water stain on a ceiling under the panels	Call your installer; it may be a roof penetration issue covered by their workmanship warranty.
Animals nesting under the panels	Call your installer about critter guards. Don't reach under the panels.
Tree branches touching or shading panels	Call a tree service. Anything near power lines goes to the utility.
Burning smell, smoke or sparks from any equipment	Leave the area and call 911, then your installer.

TIP

Need a roof repair?

If you're having the roof repaired or replaced, the panels may have to come off and go back on. Talk to your installer before the roofer starts; it's a job for people who know solar.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You keep the system healthy and keep yourself safe, without ever leaving the ground.

CHAPTER 24

"Offline" or "No Data": Any Brand

"System not reporting." "Device offline." "No data." Every brand words it a little differently, but the story is nearly always the same: the monitoring box lost its internet connection. Your panels usually keep making power the whole time. Here's a plan that works for any brand.

Step one: is it the internet or the solar?

1. Check your home internet on a phone or computer connected to your Wi-Fi.
2. Look at the app: if it shows no new data at all, that's a connection problem. If it shows data but low numbers, that's a production question (Chapter 8).
3. Think back: a new router, modem, internet provider, Wi-Fi password, or a long power outage? Any of these can knock the monitoring offline.

Step two: give it time

After a router restart or a power blip, give the system 15 to 30 minutes, and sometimes a bit longer, to find the network again. Many reconnect on their own.

Step three: use your brand's official reconnect steps

Brand	Where to go	Details in
Enphase	Enphase App: **Menu** > **Settings** > **Connectivity** > **Configure Wi-Fi** (names may vary)	Chapter 11
SolarEdge	mySolarEdge: the inverter communication or Wi-Fi option	Chapter 14
Tesla	Tesla app: **Device Offline** (Powerwall 3) or **Settings** > **Configure Wi-Fi**	Chapter 17

Step four: if it still won't connect

- Check that your router offers a **2.4 GHz** network. Several monitoring devices need it.
- Check the signal where the equipment is. A garage or basement far from the router may need a Wi-Fi extender or mesh point nearby.
- If your monitoring box was connected by a network cable or cellular, the installer set that up; call them.
- Call the maker's support line or your installer. Have your router model and the system's serial number ready.

TIP

Getting a new router? Plan ahead

Before the old router goes, write down its network name and password. Give the new router exactly the same name and password, capital letters and all. Many solar gateways and smart devices then reconnect without any fuss. Enphase notes that changing your provider, network name or password is what usually triggers "not reporting."

STAY SAFE

Wi-Fi only

None of these steps involve opening equipment, unplugging wiring or flipping breakers. If a fix seems to need that, it belongs to your installer or a licensed electrician.

FROM BILL

A very common call

Getting solar monitoring back online after a new router is one of the most common jobs I see for solar homes, because it's really a Wi-Fi job. $49 remote · $99 in your home.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Instead of worrying that your expensive system is broken, you'll know it's almost always a five-minute Wi-Fi fix.

PART 8

Scams, Help and Your Cheat-Sheet

Door-to-door solar, "free solar" and government-program pitches, fake utility calls, when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary.

CHAPTER 25

Solar Sales Pitches and "Free Solar" Scams

Solar homes, and homes that could have solar, get a lot of sales attention: knocks on the door, phone calls, ads and mailers. Many come from honest companies. Some don't. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has warned that solar and clean-energy scams are rising along with solar's popularity.

Red flags the FTC warns about

- Someone says a **government program** will pay the whole cost of solar panels, or that your system will be "free." The FTC calls these claims lies.
- Someone says they're **from the government**, or working with it.
- Someone says your **utility already signed you up** for a program, so now you have to pay or sign.
- Pressure to sign **today**, on a tablet, before you've read the contract.

Loans and financing at the kitchen table

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has raised concerns about door-to-door sales where the salesperson signs you up for the solar system and a loan from their lender partner at the same time. A solar loan or lease is a long, serious commitment, and it can affect selling your home later. Never sign one on the spot.

How to handle a pitch

1. Don't sign anything, and don't share your electric bill, account number or Social Security number at the door.
2. Ask for the company name, the salesperson's name and a printed proposal. A real company will leave one.
3. Close the door. Look the company up yourself and read reviews from several places.
4. Get quotes from more than one licensed, established installer before deciding anything.
5. Have a trusted family member, or an attorney for a big contract, read it before you sign.
6. If someone lied to you or pressured you, report it at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.

SCAM ALERT

"Free solar" and "government program" pitches

If someone says the government will pay for your solar, that it's free, or that your utility already enrolled you, it's a scam. Say "no, thank you," close the door or hang up, and report it at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

GOOD TO KNOW

Already have solar? You'll still get pitches

Sellers may offer you batteries, "upgrades," cleaning contracts or "inspections." Check with your own installer first. They know your system and your warranty.

TIP

If you already signed and regret it

Federal rules generally give you a short window to cancel many sales made at your home. Look at your contract for a cancellation notice, act quickly, and put your cancellation in writing. For anything beyond that, the Ohio Attorney General's consumer protection office or an attorney can advise you.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing the script ahead of time lets you say no calmly — and protects your home from a contract you never really wanted.

CHAPTER 26

Fake Utility Calls, Texts and Emails

Solar homeowners get the same fake "utility" calls as everyone else, plus a few with a solar twist. The fix is always the same: hang up, and call back on a number you trust.

Common versions

- "Your power will be shut off today unless you pay now" — often by gift card, payment app or cryptocurrency.
- "Your solar credit or rebate is ready; we just need your account number."
- "We need to inspect your solar meter" from someone at the door who can't show ID.
- An email or text that looks like Enphase, SolarEdge or Tesla, asking you to sign in from a link or "verify" a payment.

What the real utility does

FirstEnergy, the parent company of Ohio Edison, says it sends written disconnection notices, doesn't call or email demanding immediate payment to avoid a same-day shutoff, never requires prepaid cards, and that its employees carry photo ID. If your power comes from a different utility, look at its own scam page.

What to do

1. Hang up, or don't answer the door. You won't offend a real utility.
2. Find the phone number on your printed bill or the utility's real website, and call it yourself.
3. For solar app emails or texts, don't tap the link. Open the official app on your phone and check there.
4. If you shared a password, change it in the official app right away. If you shared card or bank details, call your bank.
5. Report the scam at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.

SCAM ALERT

"Pay now or we'll cut your power"

A real utility won't demand gift cards, payment-app transfers or cryptocurrency, and won't threaten a same-day shutoff by phone. Hang up and call the number on your bill.

SCAM ALERT

Fake solar-app emails

A message that looks like it's from your solar company and asks you to sign in from a link may be a phishing attempt. Open the Enphase, mySolarEdge or Tesla app yourself instead of tapping the link.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One simple rule, "hang up and call the number I trust," protects you from nearly every version of this scam.

CHAPTER 27

When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so you can live with your solar system confidently on your own. Part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves time and worry, and about what I don't do.

Times it's well worth a call

- **Your solar app went offline** after a new router, a new provider or a password change (Chapter 24).
- **Weak Wi-Fi** where the gateway, inverter or Powerwall sits, and you need an extender or mesh system.
- **Setting up the app** on a new phone, signing in, turning on notifications, or adding a family member's phone.
- **Making sense of the app's numbers** and doing your first monthly check together (Chapter 20).
- **A pitch or a call that doesn't feel right**, before you sign or pay anything (Chapter 25 and Chapter 26).
- **You'd simply rather have a patient person handle it.** That's always a good enough reason.

What I don't do

I don't do electrical work. Panels, wiring, inverters, gateways, batteries, breakers, disconnects and anything on the roof belong to **your solar installer** or a **licensed electrician**. I'm glad to help you get your questions ready for them, and to take care of the app and Wi-Fi side afterward.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace — no rushing, no talking down, no jargon. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll always tell you honestly when something isn't worth the money. Home visits are here in Portage County, Ohio; remote help reaches you wherever you are. I've been doing this work for more than 30 years.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This guide is free to read and share with family and neighbors.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may be greeted by Sophie

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you might first meet **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time. The actual help always comes from me.

Thank you for taking the time to understand your solar. It's a big investment, and you deserve to feel at home with it.

— Bill

CHAPTER 28

Your Home Solar Cheat-Sheet

Keep a copy of this with your solar folder. The whole guide, boiled down.

The essentials

Remember	
kW	How much power **right now**. The speedometer.
kWh	How much energy **over time**. The odometer, and what your bill counts.
Production / consumption	What the panels made / what the house used.
Winter	Short days, low sun and snow. Small December and January numbers are normal.
"Offline" / "not reporting"	Almost always Wi-Fi. Use the app's reconnect steps (Chapter 24).
Outage, no battery	Solar usually shuts off. It restarts on its own when the grid returns.
Outage, with battery	Battery takes over. Go easy on big appliances. Report the outage.
Backup Reserve (Tesla)	**Settings** > **Powerwall**, slider. Below 20 percent shows a warning.
Snow and cleaning	Stay off the roof. Let snow melt. Ask the installer about cleaning.
"Free solar" / government pitch	A scam. Report at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.
Electrical anything	Your installer or a licensed electrician. Never open equipment or flip breakers.

Write it down once

Keep handy	
System brand / inverter type	_____
System size (kW)	_____
Date turned on	_____
Monitoring app and login email	_____
Gateway / inverter serial number	_____
Battery? Whole home or some circuits?	_____
Wi-Fi network name (2.4 GHz)	_____
Installer (name and phone)	_____
Maker's support line	_____
Electric company and outage number	_____
Where my solar folder is	_____
Best month last year (kWh)	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Numbers low? Check the weather, the season and snow first (Chapter 7).
2. No data at all? Check your home internet, wait 30 minutes, then use the app's reconnect steps (Chapter 24).
3. One panel at zero on a sunny day? Screenshot it and call your installer (Chapter 8).
4. An alert in the app? Write down the exact words and call your installer or the maker.
5. Power out? Check the battery in the app, go easy on big appliances, and report the outage (Chapter 19).
6. Smoke, sparks or a burning smell? Get out and call 911.
7. Wi-Fi or app trouble? Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.