BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Reolink & Wired Camera Systems

PoE cameras, NVR recorders, Lorex and Swann kits and remote viewing — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for families and grandparents

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Reolink, Lorex & Swann NVR and DVR systems · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to wired security camera systems: the kind with a recorder box, cameras on cables and a free phone app. Read it in any order and at your own pace. Whether you're setting up a new Reolink, Lorex or Swann kit, trying to make sense of a system that came with the house, or helping a parent keep an eye on their driveway, every feature here comes with what it actually does *for you* and slow, step-by-step directions. It's written as of November 2026. The brands update their apps often, so if a screen looks a little different on yours, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting to Know Wired Camera Systems

What a wired camera system is, how one cable can carry both power and picture, how to tell an NVR from a DVR, and who makes the popular kits. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Maybe you just bought a boxed camera kit from Reolink, Lorex or Swann and it's sitting in the garage waiting for a weekend. Maybe a previous owner left a recorder and a row of cameras on your house and nobody ever showed you how they work. Or maybe your family wants to keep an eye on the driveway, the barn or Mom's front porch without paying a monthly fee. Whoever you are, this guide is for **you**.

I'm Bill. I've written this guide the way I'd explain it standing next to you in the basement, looking at the recorder together: plainly, patiently, and without the installer jargon. When a word like "PoE," "NVR" or "UID" comes up, I'll stop and tell you what it means.

You can't break it by looking around

Opening the camera app, tapping through the menus or watching old recordings won't hurt anything. There are only a few places where care really matters: **formatting the hard drive** (it erases the recordings), **resetting the recorder** (it erases your settings), and **passwords** (lose them and you may have to start over). I'll point those out clearly when we get to them.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What a wired system does for you

A wired camera system records around the clock to a hard drive inside a box in your own home. There's usually no monthly fee, no batteries to charge on a ladder, and the cameras keep recording even if the internet goes down. From your phone you can check the driveway, see who came to the door, or find the moment a package disappeared.

What's in this guide

- **The basics**: what PoE, NVR and DVR mean, and how Reolink, Lorex and Swann compare (Part 1).
- **Planning and setup**: where cameras go, how much a hard drive holds, and first-time setup (Part 2).
- **The phone apps** and watching from anywhere (Part 3).
- **Everyday use**: playback, saving clips, alerts, schedules and night vision (Part 4).
- **Family and costs**: sharing access and whether you need a cloud plan (Part 5).
- **Security, privacy and scams** (Part 6), and **fixing common problems** (Part 7).

And I'm only a phone call away

If you get stuck, you're never stuck alone. Call me at **(330) 200-8042**. No question is too small, and no one will make you feel silly for asking. Now let's meet your cameras.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What a Wired Camera System Is

A **wired camera system** is a set of security cameras connected by cables to a **recorder**, a box about the size of a hardcover book that usually lives in a closet, basement or utility room. The recorder has a hard drive inside, like a computer, and it saves the video from every camera.

The three pieces

Piece	What it does
The cameras	Mounted outside (or inside) the house. Each one has a cable running back to the recorder.
The recorder	An **NVR** or **DVR** (Chapter 4). It powers the cameras on most newer systems, stores the video on its hard drive and connects to your internet router.
The app	Free on your phone or tablet. It lets you watch live, look back at recordings and get alerts, from home or away.

How it differs from Ring or Nest

Cameras like Ring and Google Nest are mostly **Wi-Fi cameras**: each one connects to your Wi-Fi on its own, and the video is usually saved to the company's internet servers (the "cloud") for a monthly fee. A wired system is different in three ways.

- **Recording stays at home.** The video goes to the hard drive in your recorder. Most kits need no subscription at all.
- **Steady power and signal.** A cable doesn't drop out the way Wi-Fi can at the far end of a yard, and there are no batteries to recharge.
- **Around-the-clock recording.** Most recorders can record all the time, not just short clips when something moves, so you can scroll back to any minute of any day the drive still holds.

GOOD TO KNOW

The trade-off

Wired systems take more work to install, because a cable has to reach every camera. If the recorder is stolen or damaged, its recordings go with it, so put it somewhere out of sight. If you'd rather have simple Wi-Fi cameras, my guides on **Ring**, **Google Nest Cameras** and **Outdoor & Floodlight Cameras** cover those.

Who these systems suit

- Homes that want to see the whole property, not just the front door.
- Farms, barns, outbuildings and long driveways, where Wi-Fi doesn't reach well (my **Rural Property Security** guide goes further on that).
- Families who don't want another monthly bill.
- Anyone who wants to scroll back through yesterday afternoon, not just watch short motion clips.

CHAPTER 3

PoE in Plain English

You'll see the letters **PoE** on almost every box. It stands for **Power over Ethernet**. "Ethernet" is the ordinary network cable, the one with a clear plastic plug like a fat phone jack. PoE means that one cable carries **both** electricity to the camera and video back from it. No outlet is needed at the camera.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why that's good news

One cable per camera instead of two. Cameras can go high under the eaves or out on a garage, far from any outlet, and they're never "low on battery."

How the power gets there

- **From the recorder itself.** Most kits have a row of PoE ports on the back of the NVR. Plug a camera in and it gets power and starts sending video.
- **From a PoE switch.** A separate box with PoE ports, used when you need more ports or the recorder is far away.
- **From a PoE injector.** A small adapter that adds power to one cable, for a single camera.

How far a cable can run

A standard PoE cable run can reach about **328 feet (100 meters)** from the recorder or switch to the camera. Reolink notes that runs longer than about 300 feet usually need a **PoE extender** partway along. In real life, a thin or cheap cable and a power-hungry camera can shorten that, so give yourself some room.

The cable itself

- Kits come with pre-made cables in a few lengths. They're usually labeled **Cat5e** or **Cat6**, which are grades of network cable. Either works for cameras.
- For cable that runs outside or in the ground, use cable rated for outdoor or burial use. Ordinary indoor cable cracks in the sun and cold.
- Protect the plug where it meets the camera. Most cameras come with a small waterproof cap or boot. Use it; water in the plug is a common cause of a camera that drops out after a rainstorm.

STAY SAFE

Ladders and drilling

Running cable means ladders, attics and drilling through walls. If you're not steady on a ladder, please don't do this part alone. Before drilling, think about electrical wires and pipes in the wall. It's a perfectly good reason to call for help.

HEADS UP

Not every camera is PoE

Some kits mix in Wi-Fi or battery cameras, and older systems use round coaxial cable (Chapter 4). Check that the camera's box says PoE before you plug it into a PoE port.

CHAPTER 4

NVR or DVR? Telling Your System Apart

Recorders come in two main kinds, and which one you have decides what cameras it can use. The names sound alike, but you can tell them apart in ten seconds by looking at the back of the box.

	NVR (Network Video Recorder)	DVR (Digital Video Recorder)
Cameras it uses	IP cameras (network cameras)	Analog cameras
Cable	Ethernet network cable; usually PoE, so power and video share one cable	Round coaxial cable, like old TV cable. Power often needs its own wire.
Plugs on the back	A row of square network jacks, like the one on your internet router	A row of round, twist-lock connectors called **BNC**
Typical age	Most new kits sold today	Common on older installs; still sold for upgrading existing coax

Lorex describes it the same way: its NVRs work with IP cameras over Ethernet (PoE), and its DVRs work with analog cameras on coax, which is handy for upgrading a home that already has coax cable in the walls.

Why it matters to you

- **Adding a camera:** an NVR needs an IP camera; a DVR needs an analog camera. They aren't interchangeable.
- **Mixing brands:** cameras generally work best with a recorder from the same brand. Some brand combinations work, many don't fully.
- **Upgrading an old system:** if coax is already in the walls, a newer DVR may let you reuse it. Otherwise new network cable is needed.

TIP

Find your model number

Look for a label on the bottom or back of the recorder. It shows the brand, the model number and often a QR code. Write the model number on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 29. Every support page, firmware download and phone call starts with it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Hybrid recorders

A few recorders accept both kinds of camera. If yours has both round BNC plugs and square network jacks, it's probably one of these. The model's manual will say.

CHAPTER 5

Reolink, Lorex & Swann: Who Makes What

Three brands fill most store shelves and online listings for home camera kits. Each makes its own recorders, cameras and phone app. Here's the plain-English lay of the land as of November 2026.

Reolink

Reolink sells PoE cameras, Wi-Fi and battery cameras, and NVR kits. Its PoE recorders include the **RLN8-410** (8 camera channels), the **RLN16-410** (16 channels) and the larger **RLN36**, which is aimed at businesses. One free app, the **Reolink app**, works with all of them, and the free **Reolink Client** runs on Windows and Mac computers.

Lorex

Lorex sells NVR and DVR kits and Wi-Fi cameras, and it has more than one app. That's the part that confuses people, so here it is plainly:

App	Used for
Lorex Classic	The app for many Lorex recorders, including the **Lorex Fusion** collection. It was previously just called the Lorex app (and before that, Lorex Home).
Lorex Pro	A newer app for Lorex's professional NVRs.
Lorex Cloud	Still used by some older recorders, such as the NR900, NR800 and LNR series. It remains in the app stores with limited updates.
Lorex Connect	For Lorex's smart-home Wi-Fi devices.

TIP

Which Lorex app is mine?

Look at the quick-start guide that came in the box, or search your recorder's model number on lorex.com's support pages. Use the app it names. Using the wrong one is the most common reason a Lorex recorder "won't add."

Swann

Swann sells NVR and DVR kits (such as its Master Series and AdvancedX 4K PoE kits) as well as Wi-Fi cameras. Its free **Swann Security** app works with its recent DVR and NVR series and its wireless cameras in one place.

What they have in common

- Kits come with a recorder, a hard drive already installed, cameras and cables.
- Recording to the hard drive at home needs no subscription.
- Each offers optional paid cloud plans for some products (Chapter 20).
- Each app lets you watch live, play back, get alerts and share with family, in slightly different ways.

HEADS UP

About prices

Kit prices change constantly with sales and bundles, and depend on the number of cameras and the size of the hard drive. Compare the same number of cameras and the same resolution, and buy from the brand's own store or a well-known retailer. A deal that looks far too good on an unfamiliar website is a warning sign.

PART 2

Planning & Setting Up

Where the cameras should go, how much video a hard drive holds, and how to switch on the recorder and connect the cameras the first time.

CHAPTER 6

Planning Where the Cameras Go

Ten minutes of planning saves hours on a ladder. Walk around the house with the kit's box in hand and decide what you really want to see. A camera that shows a clear face at the door is worth more than three that show the tops of trees.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What good placement does for you

Footage you can actually use: faces you can recognize, license plates you can read, and alerts for people at your door instead of branches waving in the wind.

The usual spots

Spot	Why
Front door	The most useful camera of all. Aim it to catch faces of people walking up.
Driveway	Shows vehicles coming and going. Point it along the drive, not straight at the street.
Back and side doors	Common ways in that neighbors can't see.
Garage, barn or shed	Where tools, mowers and equipment live.
Inside, if you wish	A hallway or main entrance. Think carefully about privacy indoors (Chapter 23).

Good habits for every camera

- **Out of easy reach**, so nobody can knock it down or turn it, but not so high you only see hats.
- **Angled slightly down**, so faces fill more of the picture than the sky.
- **Away from bright light** shining straight into the lens, like a porch light or the setting sun. Backlit faces turn into dark shapes.
- **Under an eave** where you can. Cameras are built for weather, but less rain on the lens means a clearer picture.
- **Not facing your neighbor's windows or yard.** More on that in Chapter 23.

Before you drill: a dry run

1. Set up the recorder on a table near your router first (Chapter 8).
2. Plug each camera in with a long cable while it's still on the ground and make sure it works.
3. Hold the camera at each planned spot (or have a helper hold it) while someone watches the live picture on the phone app.
4. Adjust until the view is right, then mark the spot before you drill.

TIP

Check the weather rating

Outdoor cameras list a weather rating on the box, often written as **IP66** or **IP67**. Only mount cameras outside that are sold for outdoor use. Indoor cameras don't survive an Ohio winter.

GOOD TO KNOW

Count your channels

An 8-channel recorder can handle up to 8 cameras. If you think you'll add cameras later, a recorder with spare channels saves buying a second one.

CHAPTER 7

Hard Drives: How Much Recording You Get

The recorder saves video on a **hard drive** inside it. When people ask "how far back can I look?", the answer depends on the size of that drive, how many cameras there are, how sharp the picture is, and whether the system records all the time or only when something moves.

The words on the box

Term	Plain meaning
TB (terabyte)	The size of the drive. Bigger means more days of video. Kits often come with 1 TB, 2 TB or 4 TB.
Resolution (4K, 8MP, 5MP)	How sharp the picture is. Sharper video fills the drive faster.
Continuous or 24/7	Records every minute, all day. Uses the most space.
Motion or event recording	Records only when something moves. Uses far less space.

A real example

Reolink's support page works through one example: a **3 TB** drive and **one camera** recording all the time at its normal settings holds roughly **44 days**. A dual-lens camera on the same drive holds about **24 days**. Share that drive among four similar cameras recording all the time and you're down to around a week and a half. Switch to motion recording and it stretches much further.

TIP

Use the brand's calculator

Reolink has a free **Storage Calculator** on its website: you choose the recorder, enter the drive size, the bit rate (a measure of how much data each camera sends) and the number of cameras, and it estimates the days. Real results vary a little, and the usable space is a bit less than the number on the drive's label.

When the drive is full

Recorders are normally set to **record over the oldest video** when the drive fills up, so they keep going on their own. That's why it pays to **save** any clip you'll need later (Chapter 15). Once the recorder writes over it, it's gone.

Adding or replacing a drive

- Reolink's NVRs take standard **3.5-inch** hard drives. Reolink recommends **surveillance** or **enterprise** grade drives (made to write video around the clock) from its compatibility list, and the largest size supported depends on the recorder model.
- After installing a new drive, the recorder has to **initialize** (format) it before it will record.
- Unplug the recorder before opening it, and handle the drive gently.

HEADS UP

Formatting erases everything

Initializing or formatting a drive wipes every recording on it. Never do it on a drive that holds footage you need, for example after a break-in. Save those clips first.

CHAPTER 8

Setting Up the Recorder the First Time

There are two ways to do the first setup: with a **TV or computer monitor** plugged into the recorder, or with the **phone app**. Using a monitor is the most straightforward, and you'll be glad later to know how the recorder's own screen works. The steps below follow Reolink's guide; Lorex and Swann are very similar.

What you need

- The recorder, its power adapter and the hard drive (usually already installed).
- A monitor or TV with an **HDMI** (or VGA) input, and a cable.
- The USB **mouse** that comes in the box.
- A network cable to reach your internet router.

Step by step

1. Connect the recorder's **LAN** (network) port to a spare port on your internet router with a network cable.
2. Plug the mouse into a USB port on the recorder.
3. Connect the recorder to the monitor with the HDMI cable, and switch the TV to that input.
4. Plug in the recorder's power. Give it a minute or two to start.
5. A **setup wizard** appears. On Reolink recorders the password starts out blank, so the wizard asks you to **create a password** before you can continue. Choose a strong one and write it down.
6. Follow the wizard's screens for the date, time and network. Leave network settings on automatic unless you know you need something different.
7. Finish the wizard. You'll land on the **live view**, showing a box for each camera.

> **TIP**
>
> **The right-click trick**
>
> On a Reolink recorder's screen, right-clicking the mouse on the live view opens the menu. If you ever feel lost on the recorder's screen, right-click.

Or set it up from the phone

Reolink, Lorex and Swann can also be set up from their phone apps, which walk you through the same steps: password, time and name. That's covered in Part 3.

HEADS UP

Write the password down right now

This recorder password is the key to your system. Write it on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 29 and keep it somewhere safe. If it's lost, getting back in can mean resetting the recorder (Chapter 27).

CHAPTER 9

Plugging In the Cameras

With a PoE NVR kit, connecting cameras is usually as simple as plugging them in. The recorder sees each camera, gives it power and adds it to the screen on its own.

Connecting a PoE camera to an NVR

1. Plug one end of the network cable into the camera's cable.
2. Plug the other end into one of the recorder's **PoE ports** (often a numbered row on the back).
3. Wait a minute. The camera's picture should appear in a box on the live view.
4. Repeat for each camera, one at a time, so you can tell which is which.
5. Give each camera a sensible name, like **Front Door** or **Barn**, in the camera settings. Names make alerts and playback much easier.

TIP

Test on the table first

Connect every camera with the short cables while everything is still on the kitchen table. If a camera doesn't come up there, it's the camera or the port, not your wiring, and it's far easier to deal with before it's on the wall.

If a camera doesn't appear

- Push the plug in until it clicks, at both ends.
- Try a different port on the recorder, and a different cable.
- Look at the little lights next to the port. No light at all usually means no power or a bad cable.
- More fixes are in Chapter 25.

Adding cameras to a PoE switch

If you've run out of ports, or the cameras are far from the recorder, a PoE switch can connect them. Some recorders find cameras on a switch automatically; others need you to add them from the menu. This is where the manual for your exact model helps, or a call to someone who's done it before.

GOOD TO KNOW

Analog cameras on a DVR

On a DVR system, each camera's coax cable twists onto a numbered BNC connector, and the power lead goes to the power splitter that came in the box. The picture should appear in that numbered box on the screen.

PART 3

The Phone Apps

Getting the Reolink, Lorex or Swann app on your phone, connecting it to the recorder, and watching your cameras from anywhere.

CHAPTER 10

The Reolink App

The free **Reolink app** works on iPhone, iPad and Android. Download it from the App Store or Google Play. Check that the maker is listed as Reolink before you tap Get or Install.

Adding your NVR to the app

1. Put your phone on your **home Wi-Fi**, the same network the recorder is plugged into.
2. Open the Reolink app. If it has already spotted your recorder on the network, it shows up on the device list; just tap it.
3. If it hasn't, tap the **+** in the top-right corner and scan the **QR code** on the label on top of the NVR. With an NVR kit, scanning the recorder adds the whole system; you don't scan each camera.
4. Enter the recorder's password (the one you created in Chapter 8). If the recorder is brand-new, the app walks you through creating it.
5. Give the recorder a name, such as **Home**, and finish.

TIP

No QR sticker?

Under the QR code is a 16-digit number called the **UID** (unique ID). If the sticker is worn, tap the option under the scan window to type the UID in instead. You can also find the UID in the app under the NVR's settings, in **Device Info**.

Getting around the app

- **Tap the recorder** to see all the cameras at once. Tap one camera to see it full screen.
- **Playback** takes you to recordings (Chapter 15).
- The **gear** (settings) icon next to the recorder or a camera opens its settings.
- **Me** at the bottom holds your account and app settings.

GOOD TO KNOW

Account vs. device password

Reolink has two kinds of sign-in. The **device password** unlocks the recorder itself. A **Reolink account** (an email and password) is for things like cloud plans and two-step verification. They're different, so write both down (Chapter 21).

GOOD TO KNOW

Moving to a new phone

On a new phone, install the Reolink app, connect to home Wi-Fi and add the recorder the same way. Have the recorder password handy.

CHAPTER 11

The Lorex Classic App (and Lorex's Other Apps)

Most Lorex NVR and DVR kits, including the **Lorex Fusion** collection, use the free **Lorex Classic** app. Lorex renamed it in early 2026; before that it was simply the Lorex app, and earlier still Lorex Home. If your box or quick-start guide names a different app (Lorex Pro for professional recorders, or Lorex Cloud for some older ones), use that one instead (Chapter 5).

Adding your recorder to Lorex Classic

1. Download **Lorex Classic** from the App Store or Google Play, open it, and create a Lorex account (or sign in).
2. Tap the button to add a device and choose **Scan QR Code**.
3. Scan the QR code on the recorder's label, usually on the bottom of the recorder. If it won't scan, type in the **Device ID** printed beside it. You can also see the Device ID on the recorder's screen.
4. Enter the recorder's password when asked.
5. Choose whether to allow audio recording.
6. The app may offer **Lorex Cloud Storage**. It's optional, and you can skip it.

TIP

Keep the box

The Device ID and QR code are also on the box and quick-start guide. Snap a photo of the label with your phone before the recorder goes on a shelf where you can't turn it over.

Getting around

- The home screen lists your recorder and cameras; tap one to watch live.
- **Device Settings** (the gear) holds sharing, firmware updates and other options.
- Recordings are reached from the playback controls on each camera.

HEADS UP

Lorex Connect is a different app

Lorex Connect is for Lorex's Wi-Fi smart-home devices. Its Cloud+ plan says recorder support is "coming soon," so it doesn't cover recorders and wired cameras yet. If your recorder won't add, double-check you're in the app your recorder's guide names.

CHAPTER 12

The Swann Security App

Swann's current recorders and cameras use the free **Swann Security** app on iPhone and Android. It shows your DVR or NVR and any Swann Wi-Fi cameras together in one place.

Getting started

1. Download **Swann Security** from the App Store or Google Play.
2. Create a Swann Security account with your email and a strong password, and confirm the email.
3. Make sure the recorder is plugged into your router and switched on.
4. In the app, add a device and follow the on-screen steps for a recorder. The app shows exactly which label or code to scan for your model.
5. Name the recorder and finish.

GOOD TO KNOW

One account per recorder

A Swann Security recorder can only be paired to **one** Swann Security account. That matters when family members want to watch too (Chapter 19).

Older Swann systems

Some older Swann recorders used earlier apps such as SwannView. If your recorder is older and won't add to Swann Security, look up its model number on Swann's support website to see which app it uses.

TIP

Some settings live on the recorder

The app handles everyday watching and alerts well, but some recorder settings can only be changed on the recorder's own screen with the mouse. Keep a monitor connected, or know where a spare HDMI cable is.

CHAPTER 13

Watching from Anywhere

Once the recorder is in your app, you can watch your cameras from the grocery store, a winter trip to Florida or the grandkids' living room. This is what most people bought the system for, and it's simpler than it sounds.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Peace of mind on your phone. See whether the garage door is closed, check on a delivery, or make sure the snowplow came, all without going outside.

How it works without fuss

The brands use a built-in connection service, so you don't need to change any settings on your internet router. On Reolink, this is tied to the recorder's **UID**, which needs to be turned on for remote access. If remote viewing ever stops working, that's one of the first things to check.

Watch live

1. Open the app (Reolink, Lorex Classic or Swann Security).
2. Tap your recorder to see all the cameras.
3. Tap one camera to see it large. Turn the phone sideways for a bigger picture.
4. Pinch with two fingers to zoom in on something.
5. Tap the speaker icon if you want to hear sound from a camera that has a microphone.

If it's slow or blurry away from home

- Away from home, the apps often show a lower-quality "fluent" or "SD" picture so it loads fast. You can usually switch to the clear or HD picture in the live view, if your connection is good.
- On mobile data, watching video uses data. If your phone plan has a limit, keep watching sessions short.
- The upload speed of your home internet matters. On a slow rural connection, live view from away may be choppy; recordings at home are still fine.

HEADS UP

If it only works at home

If you can watch on home Wi-Fi but not away, the recorder may have lost its internet connection, or (on Reolink) UID may be turned off. See Chapter 26.

CHAPTER 14

Using the Recorder's Own Screen

A recorder doesn't need a phone. Plug it into a TV or monitor and you can watch every camera at once and play back recordings with the mouse. Some families keep a small monitor on the kitchen counter showing the driveway all day.

Setting it up as a viewing station

1. Connect the recorder to a TV or monitor with an HDMI cable.
2. Plug in the USB mouse.
3. Switch the TV to that HDMI input. You'll see the live view grid.
4. Double-click a camera's box to make it fill the screen; double-click again to go back to the grid.
5. On Reolink, right-click for the menu, where you'll find playback and settings.

Things the recorder's screen does best

- Watching several cameras at once on a big screen.
- Settings that the phone app doesn't offer.
- **Exporting** recordings to a USB flash drive to hand to the police or an insurance company (Chapter 15).
- Updating the cameras' firmware on a Reolink NVR (Chapter 22).

TIP

No need to move anything

If the recorder is in the basement and the TV is upstairs, you don't have to move either one. Many people simply watch on the phone or tablet and plug a monitor in only for occasional settings.

STAY SAFE

Lock the screen

If the recorder's screen is somewhere visitors or workers can see it, use the screen auto-lock option in the recorder's settings so nobody can change settings or delete recordings.

PART 4

Everyday Use

Looking back at recordings and saving the important ones, alerts that help instead of nag, recording schedules, and seeing clearly at night.

CHAPTER 15

Playing Back & Saving Clips

Something happened overnight: a package went missing, a car scraped the mailbox, or you just want to know what set the dog barking. **Playback** lets you scroll back through the recordings like rewinding a tape.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Answers instead of guesses. And when something serious happens, a saved clip is what the police and your insurance company will ask for.

Finding the moment (Reolink app)

1. Open the app, tap your recorder, then tap **Playback**.
2. Choose the camera and the **date**.
3. Slide the **timeline** along the bottom to the time you want. Colored marks on the timeline show when motion was recorded.
4. Tap play. You can speed up or slow down to scan quickly.

Saving a clip to your phone

With an NVR, you **cut out a clip** rather than downloading a whole day: you mark where it starts and ends, then download it. In the Reolink app, look for the download or clip icon in playback. On an iPhone the clip lands in your **Photos**; on Android, the app's settings show where it's saved.

TIP

If the iPhone clip isn't in Photos

Reolink suggests using the share button on the clip and choosing **Save to Files** instead.

Saving to a USB flash drive

1. Plug a USB flash drive into the recorder.
2. On the recorder's screen, open **Playback**, choose the camera, date and time.
3. Use the clip or backup option to mark the start and end, and export to the USB drive.

4. Wait for it to finish before pulling the flash drive out.

HEADS UP

Save it before it's recorded over

When the hard drive fills, the oldest video is written over (Chapter 7). If something important happened, save the clip the same day. Don't count on it still being there next month.

GOOD TO KNOW

Won't play on the computer?

Many newer cameras use a video format called **H.265** that some computers and browsers can't play. If a clip shows a black screen with sound, play it in a media player that supports H.265, or use the brand's own computer program.

CHAPTER 16

Motion Alerts That Help Instead of Nag

Alerts (push notifications) make your phone buzz when a camera sees something. Set up well, they're wonderful. Set up badly, your phone buzzes every time a tree moves, and you start ignoring it.

Smart detection: people, vehicles and animals

Most newer cameras from all three brands can tell the difference between a **person**, a **vehicle** and (on many models) an **animal**, so you can choose alerts only for what you care about. On Reolink, vehicle detection covers cars and trucks, not bicycles or motorcycles.

Turning alerts on for a camera on a Reolink NVR

1. Make sure your phone allows notifications from the Reolink app (in your phone's Settings).
2. In the app, tap the NVR's settings, then **Push Notifications**.
3. Turn on push notifications for the **NVR** first.
4. Then turn them on for each camera you want alerts from.
5. Choose the kinds of detection (for example, Person and Vehicle) and tap **Save**.

> TIP
>
> **Too many alerts?**
>
> Reolink has a **push interval**: once an alert arrives, you won't get another from that camera until the interval passes, even if motion continues. A longer interval means fewer buzzes. You can also set a push schedule so alerts only arrive at certain hours, such as overnight.

Other ways to cut the noise

- **Detection zones**: draw the part of the picture to watch (the walkway, not the busy road).
- **Sensitivity**: turn it down a notch if shadows and rain set it off.
- **Fewer cameras**: you may only want alerts from the front door and driveway, not the backyard.

HEADS UP

Alerts need the internet

Recording works without the internet, but alerts to your phone don't. If the internet is down, the recorder keeps recording, and alerts resume when the connection comes back.

CHAPTER 17

Recording Schedules: Around the Clock or on Motion

Every recorder lets you decide **when** each camera records. The choice is a balance between catching everything and how far back the hard drive can reach.

Setting	What it does	Good for
Continuous (24/7)	Records every minute.	Main doors and driveways where you want the full record.
Motion / event	Records only when motion or a person is detected, plus a few seconds before and after.	Quiet areas, and making the drive last longer.
Scheduled	Different settings by time of day or day of week.	For example, motion only by day, continuous overnight.

Where to change it

- **Reolink**: in the app, open the NVR settings and look for the recording or schedule option for each camera, or on the recorder's own screen under its recording settings.
- **Lorex** and **Swann**: the recorder's own screen has the full recording schedule; the apps offer some options depending on the model.

TIP

A sensible starting point

Leave continuous recording on for the front door and driveway, and use motion recording for the rest. Check after a couple of weeks how many days back you can scroll, and adjust.

GOOD TO KNOW

Finding motion in a continuous recording

Even when a camera records all the time, the playback timeline marks the moments where motion was detected, and Reolink lets you filter playback to show only those parts. You don't have to watch hours of an empty driveway.

Check the date and time

A recording is only useful if its time stamp is right. After setup, and after any long power outage, glance at the clock shown on the live view. If it's wrong, fix it in the recorder's system or date-and-time settings, and turn on automatic time if the option is there.

CHAPTER 18

Night Vision & Lights

Security cameras see in the dark in one of two ways, and many newer models do both.

Type	What you see
Infrared (IR) night vision	Little red lights around the lens shine invisible light. The picture turns **black and white** at night, but it's clear.
Color night vision / spotlight	The camera uses a bright white light or a very sensitive sensor to show **color** at night, which helps with clothing and car colors.

Getting a better night picture

- **Keep the lens clean.** Spider webs are the number-one night-vision problem: IR light bounces off them and fills the screen with glare or triggers false alerts.
- **Mind reflections.** An eave, a gutter or a wall right next to the lens can reflect IR light back and wash out the picture. Angle the camera so nothing is close in front of it.
- **Glass is a problem.** A camera behind a window at night sees its own reflection. Mount it outside.
- **Porch lights help.** A bit of steady light makes faces clearer.

TIP

Spotlights and neighbors

Bright spotlights that switch on with motion can be a deterrent, but they can also shine into a neighbor's bedroom window. Point them at your own property, and consider limiting them to certain hours (Chapter 23).

HEADS UP

Black-and-white during the day?

If a camera stays in black and white in daylight, its day/night setting may be stuck on night. Look in the camera's display settings for day/night mode and set it to automatic.

Cleaning a camera safely

1. Use a soft, dry microfiber cloth. For grime, dampen it slightly with water.
2. Wipe the glass gently. No paper towels or harsh cleaners, which can scratch.
3. Use a sturdy ladder with someone holding it, or a long-handled duster for spider webs.

PART 5

Family, Cloud & Costs

Letting family members watch the cameras safely, and an honest look at whether you need a paid cloud plan.

CHAPTER 19

Sharing Access with Family

It's common for a son or daughter to want to check the cameras at a parent's house, or for a neighbor to keep an eye out while you're away. Each brand handles this differently, and the safest way is to give each person their **own** access rather than handing out your password.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Your family can check on things without calling you, and you can take away access later without changing everyone's passwords.

Reolink: Share Device

1. In the Reolink app, open the recorder's settings and tap **Share Device**.
2. Tap **Add Share User**.
3. Choose the permission. **View Only** is best for most family members. On an NVR you can also choose which cameras they see. **Allow Management** lets them change settings too, so save that for someone you'd trust with the keys.
4. Send them the invitation the app creates (a QR code or a link).
5. On their phone, they install the Reolink app, tap **+** and scan the code or open the link.

GOOD TO KNOW

Up to 20 people

Reolink allows one device to be shared with up to 20 users. Older versions of the app shared the device's QR code along with its password; the newer Share User option is safer because it doesn't hand out your password.

Lorex Classic: Share Device

1. The family member creates their own Lorex account in the Lorex Classic app first.
2. In your app, open the **recorder's** Device Settings, scroll down and tap **Share Device**.
3. Add the person's email address.
4. You can change what they can do, or remove them, at any time.

HEADS UP

Share the recorder, not single cameras

With Lorex, cameras connected to an NVR or DVR are shared through the recorder. You can't share just one camera on its own.

Swann Security: one shared account

Swann works differently. A Swann Security recorder can only be paired to **one** account, and Swann doesn't currently offer guest or limited access. To let family watch, they install the Swann Security app and sign in with **your** account. That gives them full access, including settings.

STAY SAFE

If you share a Swann login

Only share it with people you'd trust with your house key. Use a password you don't use anywhere else. If someone should no longer have access, change the account password, and give the new one only to those who still need it.

Good sharing habits

- Give each person the least access they need: watching, not settings.
- Review who has access once a year, and after a move, a divorce or a falling-out.
- Remember that anyone with access can see when you come and go. Share with care.

CHAPTER 20

Local Recording vs. Cloud Plans

This is the big question for many families: "Do I have to pay every month?" For a wired system, usually **no**. Here's the honest picture.

Local recording: no monthly fee

Your NVR or DVR records to its own hard drive at home. Watching live, playback, alerts and sharing all work through the free apps. You pay once for the equipment, and that's it, other than a new hard drive every several years when the old one wears out.

Cloud plans: an optional extra

A **cloud plan** sends copies of recordings to the company's servers over the internet. The one real advantage: if a burglar takes the recorder, or a fire or flood destroys it, the cloud copies survive. Here's what each brand offers for wired systems, as of November 2026.

Brand	What the cloud option is
Reolink Cloud	Stores **motion event** clips, not continuous recording. Battery cameras on an NVR aren't supported. A PoE camera can use it if it's set up on its own (or through HyBridge Mode on NVRs that offer it) and the camera model supports cloud. Available only in some countries; check cloud.reolink.com for current plans and prices.
Lorex	Lorex Classic offers optional Lorex Cloud Storage when you add a recorder, and you can skip it. Lorex's newer Connect Cloud+ plan doesn't support recorders yet. Lorex lists current plans and prices on its cloud plans page, and promises at least 30 days' notice before any price change.
Swann Secure+	Optional Secure+ memberships. Swann's U.S. plans page lists the entry plan at **$4.99 a month per device** or **$49.99 a year**, with higher tiers above that. Check whether your recorder or camera is eligible before you buy.

TIP

A free alternative to the cloud

Hide the recorder well: a closet, a locked cabinet or the basement, not next to the TV. A burglar can't take what they can't find. And save important clips to your phone the same day; they're then backed up wherever your phone's photos are.

Do you need a plan? A quick test

- **Probably not** if the recorder is well hidden, you check things regularly, and you're comfortable saving important clips yourself.
- **Maybe** if the recorder can't be hidden, the property is often empty (a cabin, a rental, a farm building), or you want an off-site copy no matter what.

HEADS UP

Free trials renew

If you start a free trial, put a reminder on your calendar a few days before it ends. Many trials turn into paid plans automatically. You can cancel in the app or on the brand's website.

GOOD TO KNOW

Camera Subscriptions guide

If you also have Ring, Nest or other Wi-Fi cameras with their own plans, my **Camera Subscriptions** guide compares them all in one place.

PART 6

Security, Privacy & Scams

Strong passwords, two-step sign-in, keeping the software up to date, respecting the neighbors, and the scams aimed at camera owners.

CHAPTER 21

Passwords & Two-Step Verification

A camera system is a window into your home. The passwords are what keep it *your* window. There are usually two to look after.

Password	What it protects
The recorder (device) password	Unlocks the NVR or DVR itself: on its screen, in the app and on a computer. Set during first setup (Chapter 8).
Your app account	The email and password for your Reolink, Lorex or Swann account. Used to sign in to the app and for cloud plans.

Make them strong and different

- Use a long password, a short phrase of three or four unrelated words works well.
- Don't reuse your email, bank or Facebook password. If one site is breached, criminals try the same password everywhere.
- Never leave a recorder on a blank or default password, and never use something like 123456 or "admin."
- Write both on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 29 and keep it somewhere private.

Turn on two-step verification (Reolink)

Two-step verification (also called 2FA) means that signing in to your account takes your password *and* a code from an app on your phone. Even if someone learns your password, they can't get in without your phone. On Reolink it's optional, but worth it.

1. Sign in to your account on the **Reolink website**.
2. Open **Account Details** and find the **Security** section.
3. Turn on two-step verification and follow the steps to link an **authenticator app** on your phone.
4. Enter the code the authenticator app shows to finish.
5. Save the **backup codes** it offers somewhere safe, in case you lose your phone.

TIP

Set a recovery email too

Reolink lets you add a recovery email to your account, and newer Reolink NVRs (such as the RLN8-410, RLN16-410 and RLN36) can email you a reset if you forget the recorder password, as long as the recorder is online. Set it up now, while everything works (Chapter 27).

GOOD TO KNOW

Lorex and Swann

Lorex and Swann accounts also have password and security settings in their apps under your account or profile. Use a strong, unique password there too, and turn on any extra sign-in protection the app offers.

CHAPTER 22

Firmware Updates

Firmware is the software built into the recorder and the cameras. Companies release updates to fix bugs and close security holes. An up-to-date recorder is a safer recorder.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Fewer glitches, new features now and then, and protection against security problems that have been found since your system was made.

Reolink: from the app

1. Make sure the recorder is online and your phone has a good connection.
2. In the Reolink app, open the NVR's settings and go to **Device Info** (on some versions, **Administration**).
3. Tap **Firmware Update** (or **Update Device**), then **Update Manually** to check for a new version.
4. Follow the on-screen steps and leave the recorder alone until it restarts.
5. Turn on **Auto Update** if your recorder offers it, so future updates install on their own.

GOOD TO KNOW

Cameras on a Reolink NVR

Cameras connected to a Reolink NVR are updated from the recorder's own screen (in its system maintenance settings), not from the phone app. That's one of the times a monitor and mouse come in handy.

Lorex

- In the Lorex app, open the recorder's **Device Settings** and look for **Firmware** to see if an update is waiting, and tick the option to check for updates automatically.
- Many Lorex recorders can also check from their own screen; on some series it's under **Main Menu** > **Advanced** > **Auto Upgrade**.
- An update takes about 5 to 10 minutes, and the recorder restarts by itself. Lorex firmware updates are free.

Swann

Swann publishes recorder firmware on its support website (support.swann.com) under its firmware updates section. Search your recorder's model number there.

HEADS UP

Don't pull the plug

Never unplug the recorder or a camera while firmware is updating. Start updates at a quiet time, not during a storm, and wait for the restart.

SCAM ALERT

Updates come from the app or the brand's website only

No real company calls you, emails a link or pops up a phone number to "update your cameras." Updates come through the app, the recorder's menu or the brand's own support website. Anything else is a scam (Chapter 24).

CHAPTER 23

Privacy & Being a Good Neighbor

Cameras protect your home, but they also see things that aren't yours: the sidewalk, the street, and sometimes the neighbors. A little care keeps the peace on your road and protects your own family's privacy too.

Pointing cameras the considerate way

- Aim at **your** doors, driveway and yard. Avoid views into a neighbor's windows, back yard or pool.
- If a view can't avoid a neighbor's property, cover that part with a **privacy mask** (below).
- If a neighbor asks what your camera sees, consider showing them. It usually settles any worry.

Blocking part of the picture: privacy masks

A **privacy mask** is a black box you draw over part of the picture. That part is never shown or recorded. On Reolink:

1. In the Reolink app, open the camera's settings and tap **Display**.
2. Find **Privacy Mask** near the bottom of the screen.
3. Draw a box over the area to hide, such as a neighbor's window, and save.
4. On the recorder's own screen (newer menus), it's under **Settings** > **Camera** > **Display**.

> GOOD TO KNOW
> **A mask isn't a motion zone**
> Reolink notes that a masked area may still set off motion detection. If something in that area keeps triggering alerts, also leave it out of the camera's detection zone.

Sound recording

Many cameras have microphones and can record sound. Recording people's conversations raises more privacy questions than recording video, and laws about recording audio vary. For outdoor cameras that can hear the sidewalk or a neighbor's patio, the simplest choice is to turn audio recording off in the camera's settings.

Inside your own home

- Tell everyone who lives in or regularly visits the home where indoor cameras are, including caregivers and house guests.
- Keep cameras out of bedrooms and bathrooms.
- Remember who has shared access (Chapter 19), and that they can see inside too.

TIP

Giving footage to police

If police ask for footage after a crime in the neighborhood, it's your choice what to share. Export the specific clip they need to a USB drive (Chapter 15) rather than giving anyone your password.

CHAPTER 24

Camera Scams to Watch For

Criminals know that people with security cameras care about security, and they use that worry. These are the tricks to recognize. The rule behind all of them: **slow down, hang up, and check for yourself**.

SCAM ALERT

Fake support phone numbers

Scammers post phony customer-support numbers for well-known companies online, including in search results and ads. You call for help with your cameras and reach someone who wants remote access to your computer and payment for "repairs" or a "service contract." Get support contacts only from the brand's own website (reolink.com, lorex.com, swann.com), your receipt or the box.

SCAM ALERT

"Your camera has been hacked" calls

A caller says your cameras or network have been hacked and they can fix it, for a fee or with remote access. The FTC says an unexpected tech-support call is a scam, even when the caller ID looks local or official. Hang up. Real companies don't call you out of the blue about your cameras.

SCAM ALERT

"I recorded you through your camera" emails

An email claims the sender hacked your camera or webcam and recorded you, and demands payment in Bitcoin within hours. It may even show an old password of yours, taken from a data breach elsewhere. The FTC's advice: don't pay. It's a mass email sent to thousands of people. Change any password it mentions, wherever you still use it.

SCAM ALERT

Pop-ups with a phone number

A warning on your computer or phone says your device is infected and to call a number. The FTC says pop-ups that tell you to call tech support are scams. Close the window; don't call.

If you already called or paid

1. Hang up or disconnect. If you let someone into your computer, turn it off and have it checked.
2. Call your bank or card company using the number on the back of your card.
3. Change your camera app password and recorder password from a device you trust.
4. Report it at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.
5. Call someone you trust. You're not the first, and there's no shame in it.

SCAM ALERT

Gift cards are always a red flag

No camera company, utility or government office asks to be paid in gift cards, Bitcoin or wire transfers. Anyone who does is a scammer.

PART 7

Fixing Things

What to do when a camera goes dark, the app can't connect, the recorder password is lost, or the power goes out.

CHAPTER 25

A Camera Shows No Video

A black box on the screen, or a camera marked offline, is the most common problem with any camera system. Usually it's the cable or the plug. Work through these in order.

Step by step

1. **Is it just one camera, or all of them?** If all are out, skip to the recorder checks below.
2. **Check the plug at the camera end**, especially after rain. Make sure it's pushed in until it clicks and the waterproof cap is on.
3. **Check the port on the recorder.** Look at the little lights beside the port. No lights usually means no power reaching the camera.
4. **Swap ports.** Move the camera's cable to a different PoE port on the recorder.
5. **Test with a short cable.** If you can reach the camera, bring it to the recorder and plug it in with a short, known-good cable. If it works, the long cable is the problem.
6. **Restart.** Unplug the cameras, then plug them back in one at a time.
7. **Update firmware** on the recorder and cameras (Chapter 22).

If every camera is out

- Is the recorder on? Check its lights and power adapter.
- Was there a power flicker? Give it a few minutes to restart fully.
- Too many power-hungry cameras on one recorder can exceed its power budget. If problems started after you added a camera, unplug that one and see if the others return.

TIP

Night only?

If a camera works by day but is useless at night, it's probably a spider web, a reflection, or something right in front of the lens (Chapter 18).

HEADS UP

Storm damage

After a nearby lightning strike, cameras and ports can fail. If several go out after a storm, it's worth having someone look at the whole system.

CHAPTER 26

The App Says Offline, or Won't Work Away from Home

Sometimes the cameras are recording fine at home, but your phone can't reach them. That's almost always the connection between the recorder and the internet.

Work through these

1. **Is your home internet working?** Try another website on home Wi-Fi. If the internet is down, wait for it to return; the recorder is still recording.
2. **Check the recorder's network cable** at both ends: the recorder's LAN port and the router.
3. **Restart the router**, wait for it to come back, then restart the recorder.
4. **Reolink only:** make sure **UID** is turned on for the NVR. Some models let you change it in the app; others need the recorder's screen or the Reolink Client.
5. **Update the app** on your phone from the App Store or Google Play.
6. **Remove and re-add** the recorder in the app, using its QR code or UID (Chapter 10, 11 or 12).

GOOD TO KNOW

New router? New internet company?

If you've changed internet providers or replaced the router, plug the recorder's network cable into the **new** router. It's an easy thing to miss when the installer leaves.

TIP

Works at home but not away?

Turn off Wi-Fi on your phone and try on mobile data. If it fails only away, the recorder may have lost its internet connection or its remote access setting. If it fails on both, update or reinstall the app.

HEADS UP

Alerts stopped?

If the cameras work but the phone stopped buzzing, check the phone's notification settings for the app, any Focus or Do Not Disturb mode, and the push notification settings in Chapter 16.

CHAPTER 27

Forgot the Recorder Password, Recording Gaps & Power Outages

Three problems that worry people more than they need to, with calm steps for each.

Forgot the recorder password (Reolink)

- **Security question or recovery email.** Newer Reolink NVRs offer a password reset by security question, if you set one, or by recovery email on models such as the RLN8-410, RLN16-410 and RLN36. The recorder needs internet access to send the email.
- **Restore from another device.** If the app or Reolink Client on another device is still logged in, it can restore the NVR. This clears the settings but keeps the recordings. Then run setup again and create a new password.
- **Hard reset, the last resort.** Press and hold the recorder's reset button for about 10 seconds, until it beeps. This erases the settings, so you'll run the setup wizard again.

HEADS UP

Before a reset

If there's footage you need on the drive, save it first if you can still get to it. And have the model and serial number ready if you contact the brand's support.

GOOD TO KNOW

Lorex and Swann

Lorex and Swann recorders have their own password-recovery steps, which vary by model. Search your recorder's model number on lorex.com or support.swann.com, or call Lorex or Swann support using the number on their own website.

Gaps in the recordings

- **Recording schedule.** The camera may be on motion-only recording (Chapter 17).
- **Hard drive warnings.** Look on the recorder's screen or in the app's storage settings for a drive error or a "no HDD" message. A drive that keeps failing may need replacing.
- **Wrong clock.** If the date and time are wrong, the recording is there but under the wrong time.
- **Power cuts.** Nothing is recorded while the power is off.

Power outages

When the power goes out, the recorder and PoE cameras go out with it. When the power returns, they normally start back up on their own. Afterward, check that every camera reconnected, recording resumed and the clock is right.

TIP

A battery backup (UPS)

An **uninterruptible power supply** (UPS) is a battery box that keeps the recorder running through short outages. Because PoE cameras get their power from the recorder, they stay on too. Plug the router and modem into it as well if you want alerts during an outage. If the recorder starts restarting on its own after you add a UPS, Reolink suggests plugging it straight into the wall for a day or two to see whether the UPS is the cause.

PART 8

Help & Your Cheat-Sheet

When a hand is worth it, how to reach me, and the whole guide boiled down to the essentials.

CHAPTER 28

When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so you can handle most of your camera system on your own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time, worry or a trip up a ladder. Here's my plain advice.

Times it's worth a call

- **A new kit still in the box.** My **Security Cameras** install service covers planning where the cameras go, running cable, mounting, and setting up the recorder and apps.
- **An inherited system** nobody knows the password to, from a house you bought or a parent's home.
- **Ladder work**, attics and drilling through walls, if you'd rather not be on a ladder.
- **Cameras that drop out** after storms, or a camera too far from the recorder.
- **Setting up family sharing** so the kids can watch Mom and Dad's driveway safely.
- **Saving footage** after a break-in or an accident, for the police or insurance.
- **Anything that feels like a scam**, or a call claiming your cameras were hacked.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace, in your home here in Portage County or remotely over the phone and internet. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, I don't sell you gadgets you don't need, and I'll tell you honestly when a subscription isn't worth it. I bring more than 30 years of professional experience to every visit.

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**. Bill's Home Tech serves Portage County, Ohio. No question is too small.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may meet Sophie

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you may be greeted by **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer simple questions and get you on my schedule. The actual help always comes from me.

SCAM ALERT

I'll never call you out of the blue

I don't make surprise calls about your cameras being hacked, and I never ask for gift cards. If someone calls claiming to be me or any camera company, hang up and call the number you know.

Thank you for letting me help you keep an eye on home. Take your time, explore without fear, and remember I'm only a phone call away.

— Bill

CHAPTER 29

Your Camera System Cheat-Sheet

The whole guide, boiled down. Keep a copy near the recorder.

The essentials

To do this	Go here
Watch live	Open the app (Reolink, Lorex Classic or Swann Security) > tap the recorder > tap a camera.
Look back	Camera > **Playback** > pick the date > slide the timeline.
Save a clip	In playback, mark start and end, download to the phone; or export to a USB drive at the recorder.
Share with family	Reolink: **Share Device** > **Add Share User**. Lorex: recorder's Device Settings > **Share Device**. Swann: same account login.
Recorder menu (Reolink)	Right-click the mouse on the recorder's screen.
Update firmware	App > NVR settings > Device Info > Firmware Update (Reolink); Device Settings > Firmware (Lorex).
Hide part of the view	Camera settings > **Display** > **Privacy Mask** (Reolink).

Write it down once

Keep handy	
Brand and recorder model	_____
Recorder UID / Device ID	_____
Recorder password	_____ (keep this page private)
App account email	_____
Where the recorder is	_____
Hard drive size and days it holds	_____
Cloud plan (if any) and renewal date	_____
Who has shared access	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. One camera dark: check its plug, swap the recorder port, try a short cable.
2. All cameras dark: check the recorder's power, wait for it to restart.
3. App can't connect: check the home internet, restart the router, then the recorder.
4. Forgot the password: try the recovery email or security question before any reset.
5. Something important happened: save the clip today, before it's recorded over.
6. A call or email says your cameras were hacked: hang up or delete it, and never pay.
7. Still stuck: call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

FROM BILL

I'm here when you need me

Setting up a new kit, rescuing an old one, or just a question: **(330) 200-8042** or **billshometech.com/book**. $49 remote · $99 in your home.