BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Tapo & Kasa Cameras

TP-Link indoor, outdoor and battery cameras, memory cards, Tapo Care and sharing — 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 TP-Link Tapo & Kasa cameras and the Tapo app · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to TP-Link's Tapo and Kasa cameras: the little pan-and-tilt cameras on the shelf, the weatherproof ones on the garage, and the battery cameras that go where there's no outlet. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Every setting comes with what it actually does *for you*, and every job comes with slow, numbered steps. The Tapo app changes often, so if a button has moved a little, look nearby for the same word.

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PART 1

Getting Started

Who makes Tapo and Kasa, which camera is which, and how to decide between a battery camera and one that plugs in.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Maybe you picked up a little Tapo camera at the store because it cost less than a nice dinner out. Maybe a son or daughter set up a Kasa camera in your living room a few years ago and now the app keeps asking you to "link" something. Or maybe you'd simply like to see the front porch from your phone. 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. Tapo and Kasa cameras are some of the most popular cameras I see, because they're inexpensive and sold at nearly every big store. They're also very capable, once someone explains the handful of settings that matter. That's what this guide does, patiently and in plain English, without trying to sell you anything.

What this guide will do for you

- Sort out the difference between Tapo and Kasa, and explain why your Kasa cameras may now live in the Tapo app.
- Help you choose between indoor and outdoor, pan-and-tilt and fixed, battery and plug-in.
- Walk you through setup one step at a time, including the 2.4 GHz Wi-Fi detail that trips up so many people.
- Show you how to record to a small memory card for free, and help you decide whether the paid Tapo Care plan is worth it.
- Explain sharing with family, privacy mode, Alexa and Google screens, updates, and keeping your account safe.

The big promise: you can't break it

Nothing you tap in the Tapo app will damage the camera. If a setting turns out wrong, you change it back. If setup fails, you start again. Even a full reset just returns the camera to the way it came out of the box. The few things that really matter, like your password and where an outdoor camera points, I'll mark clearly.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

A camera you understand gives real peace of mind: a look at the front door when a package is due, a check on the dog while you're out, or a way for family far away to know the house is fine. A camera that confuses you just sends alerts you ignore.

And I'm only a phone call away

If anything in this guide leaves you unsure, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question, especially about a camera that won't join the Wi-Fi.

Let's start by sorting out the names on the box.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Tapo and Kasa: Who Makes What

Both names belong to the same company, **TP-Link**, which also makes Wi-Fi routers. Over the years TP-Link sold smart-home gear under two brands, each with its own phone app.

Name	What it means
Kasa	The older brand: cameras such as the Kasa Spot and Kasa outdoor cams, plus smart plugs and switches. Its app is called **Kasa Smart**.
Tapo	The newer brand, with most of TP-Link's current cameras, doorbells and battery cameras. Its app is called **TP-Link Tapo**, or just Tapo.
TP-Link ID	The one account (an email address and password) that signs you in to both apps. More on this in Chapter 6.

Kasa cameras can now move into the Tapo app

If you have Kasa cameras, you don't have to keep two apps forever. TP-Link lets you link the two apps so your Kasa devices show up in Tapo alongside your Tapo cameras. You do it from the Tapo app, under **Me** > **Link Tapo with Kasa**, signed in with the same TP-Link ID in both apps. Chapter 16 walks through it, and Chapter 17 explains what happens to a Kasa Care plan and old cloud clips (they don't move over).

GOOD TO KNOW

Most of this guide uses the Tapo app

Because new cameras are Tapo and Kasa devices can be linked into Tapo, the steps here are written for the Tapo app. If you still use the Kasa app, the ideas are the same, but the buttons may be in different places.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing it's all one company and one account means one password to remember, and one app to open when you want to see your cameras.

CHAPTER 3

Which Camera Is Which?

Tapo makes a lot of models, and the model numbers (C200, C210, C425 and so on) don't tell you much at a glance. They fall into a few families. The model number is printed on the box and on a label on the camera; write it on the Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 27.

Indoor pan-and-tilt cameras

These are the little round-headed cameras that sit on a shelf and can turn left and right (**pan**) and up and down (**tilt**) when you drag your finger on the phone. Models such as the **Tapo C200**, **C210**, **C220** and **C225** are in this family. One camera can look around a whole room, and many can follow movement. They plug into a wall outlet.

Fixed indoor cameras

Smaller cameras that point one way, like the old Kasa Spot. Good for watching one doorway or a pet bed. They also plug in.

Outdoor plug-in cameras

Weatherproof cameras that mount on a wall or eave and run on a power cord, some of them pan-and-tilt too, such as the **Tapo C510W** and **C520WS**. Because they always have power, they can record all day and night to a memory card.

Battery and solar cameras

Wire-free cameras with a rechargeable battery, so you can mount them where there's no outlet. The **Tapo C425** has a solar panel built in; the **C460** can pair with a separate Tapo solar panel. They sleep until they sense motion, then wake and record a clip. Chapter 4 explains the trade-offs.

Hubs

Tapo also sells small hubs, the **H200** and **H500**, that collect recordings from several Tapo cameras in one place, on a memory card inside the hub. Some battery cameras are designed to work through a hub; the box will say so. Most people with one or two plug-in cameras don't need one.

TIP

Check the box for three things

Before you buy: **indoor or outdoor**, **plug-in or battery**, and whether it needs a **hub**. Those three answers tell you more than the resolution numbers do.

GOOD TO KNOW

What do they cost?

Tapo cameras are among the least expensive name-brand cameras. As of November 2026, many indoor models sell for well under $50, with outdoor and solar models costing more. Prices change with every sale, so treat that as a rough guide, not a quote.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Picking the right family for each spot means you buy once: a pan-and-tilt camera for the living room, a weatherproof one for the driveway, and a battery one only where there's truly no outlet.

CHAPTER 4

Battery or Plug-In?

This is the biggest decision for an outdoor camera, and it's worth a few minutes of thought.

	Plug-in (wired)	Battery or solar
Power	Always on, from an outlet	Rechargeable battery; solar can top it up
Recording	Can record around the clock to a memory card	Records short clips when it senses motion
Where it goes	Within reach of an outlet (or an outdoor-rated cord)	Almost anywhere it can reach your Wi-Fi
Upkeep	Very little	Recharging, or keeping the solar panel in the sun
First moment of an event	Usually caught, if recording all the time	A second or two may be missed while it wakes

How long does a battery last?

TP-Link's battery figures are lab numbers, usually quoted as several months on a charge, and they assume only a few minutes of activity a day. Check the product page for your model's figure and the assumptions behind it. A busy street, many alerts, lots of live viewing, cold weather or weak Wi-Fi all shorten it, sometimes a great deal.

Solar helps, with conditions

A solar panel only keeps a battery topped up if it gets real, direct sun. Under a deep porch roof or on the north side of the house, it may not keep up, especially in an Ohio winter. Plan on charging it by hand now and then if the spot is shady.

TIP

My usual advice

If there's an outlet anywhere nearby, a plug-in camera is less fuss. Save battery cameras for the places that truly have no power, like a detached garage or a fence post.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Choosing the right power source up front saves you from climbing a ladder every few weeks to recharge a camera that's watching a busy driveway.

PART 2

Setting Up

Getting your Wi-Fi ready, making your TP-Link ID, adding your first camera, and what to do when setup fails. Plus where to put indoor and outdoor cameras.

CHAPTER 5

Before You Start: Your Wi-Fi and the 2.4 GHz Question

Most setup trouble with Tapo and Kasa cameras comes down to one detail: the kind of Wi-Fi signal the camera can hear. Five minutes here saves an hour of frustration later.

What "2.4 GHz" means

Most home routers send out Wi-Fi on two **bands**, like two radio stations: **2.4 GHz**, which reaches farther and goes through walls better, and **5 GHz**, which is faster but doesn't reach as far. Most Tapo and Kasa cameras use only the 2.4 GHz band, though some newer models also work on 5 GHz. Your camera's box or product page says which.

Find out what your Wi-Fi looks like

1. On your phone, open **Settings** and then **Wi-Fi**, and look at the list of networks.
2. If you see two similar names, such as "Smith Home" and "Smith Home 5G", the one *without* 5G (or with 2.4 in its name) is the 2.4 GHz network. Connect your phone to that one for setup.
3. If you see only one name, your router is probably sending both bands under one name. That usually works: the camera simply uses the 2.4 GHz part.
4. Write down the exact Wi-Fi name and password on the Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 27. Capital letters matter.

Other things to have ready

- **Use your normal, password-protected home Wi-Fi**, not a guest network or a phone hotspot.
- **Turn off any VPN app** on your phone during setup; it can get in the way.
- **Stand close to the router** the first time. You can move the camera to its real spot afterward.
- **Bluetooth on** and the app allowed to find nearby devices, if your phone asks.

TIP

Mesh systems and extenders

If you have a mesh system or a range extender and setup keeps failing, try setting the camera up near the main router first. Once it works, it can usually roam to the nearest unit.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing your Wi-Fi name, password and band before you start turns setup into a five-minute job instead of an evening of "setup failed" messages.

CHAPTER 6

Your TP-Link ID and the Tapo App

Every Tapo camera belongs to an account called a **TP-Link ID**. It's simply an email address and a password you choose. The same ID works in the Tapo app, the Kasa app and TP-Link's router apps.

Get the app

1. On an iPhone, open the **App Store**. On Android, open the **Google Play Store**.
2. Search for **TP-Link Tapo**. Check that the maker shown is TP-Link.
3. Tap **Get** or **Install**, then open the app.

Make your TP-Link ID

1. In the Tapo app, tap **Sign Up**.
2. Enter an email address you check regularly. This becomes your TP-Link ID.
3. Choose a strong password that you don't use anywhere else (Chapter 23 has tips).
4. Look in your email for TP-Link's message and follow it to confirm the account.
5. Return to the app and sign in.

HEADS UP

One ID per household is easiest

Set the cameras up on **one** TP-Link ID, the person who looks after the household's tech, and share them with everyone else (Chapter 18). If each family member adds cameras on their own ID, nobody can see everything, and untangling it later is a chore.

TIP

Already have a Kasa account?

If you used the Kasa app before, you already have a TP-Link ID. Sign in to Tapo with that same email and password instead of making a new one; that's what lets you link Kasa devices later.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One account with a strong password, written down safely, means you'll never be locked out of your own cameras, and you can hand access to family without handing over your password.

CHAPTER 7

Adding Your First Camera, Step by Step

The Tapo app leads you through setup with pictures. Here's what to expect, so nothing surprises you. The exact screens differ a little from model to model.

1. Plug the camera in near your router (or charge and switch on a battery camera). Wait until its light blinks, which means it's ready for setup. Your quick-start card shows the color.
2. Make sure your phone is on your home Wi-Fi (the 2.4 GHz network if you have two names).
3. Open the Tapo app and tap the **+** button, usually at the top of the Home screen.
4. Choose your camera from the list, or scan the QR code on the camera or its box if the app offers it.
5. Follow the pictures. The app may ask permission to use Bluetooth, location or local network: tap **Allow**. These let your phone find the new camera.
6. When asked, choose your home Wi-Fi network and type its password carefully.
7. Give the camera a plain name you'll recognize, such as "Front Porch" or "Living Room". You'll say this name to Alexa or Google later.
8. If the app offers a firmware update right away, let it finish. Don't unplug the camera while it updates.
9. Tap the camera on the Home screen. You should see a live picture.

TIP

Pick a name you can say out loud

Short, different names work best with voice assistants: "Porch", "Driveway", "Kitchen". Avoid two cameras with similar names.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Ten calm minutes of setup gives you a camera you can check from anywhere with a phone signal, in two taps.

CHAPTER 8

When Setup Fails or the Camera Won't Connect

"Setup failed" or "Unable to connect" is the most common message people see. It's almost always the Wi-Fi, not the camera. Work through these in order; most problems are solved by step 4.

1. **Check the band.** Is your phone on the 2.4 GHz network (Chapter 5)? If your camera only does 2.4 GHz and your phone was on the 5 GHz name, switch and try again.
2. **Check the password.** Retype it slowly. Capital letters, zeros and the letter O are easy to mix up.
3. **Move closer.** Bring the camera and phone near the router for setup.
4. **Turn off your VPN** app if you have one, and try again.
5. **Skip the extender.** If you have a range extender or mesh, set up on the main router's network.
6. **Reset the camera and start over.** With the camera powered on, press and hold its reset button for about 5 seconds until the light blinks red (some models need 10 seconds), then begin setup again in the app. On pan-and-tilt models, tilt the lens up to find the button; on battery models it's under a cover.
7. **Restart the router**: unplug it for 30 seconds, plug it back in, wait for the lights to settle.

When a camera that worked goes offline

If a camera that used to work now shows **Offline**, the cause is usually a router change (a new router or a new Wi-Fi password from your internet company), a power blip, or a weak signal where the camera sits. Unplug the camera for ten seconds and plug it back in. If you changed your Wi-Fi name or password, the camera can't follow along on its own; you'll need to reset it and set it up again.

GOOD TO KNOW

If it still won't work

Contact TP-Link support through the Tapo app or tp-link.com/us, with your TP-Link ID and the camera's model number from its label handy. Or call me; a router setting is often the culprit.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Most "broken" cameras are just confused about the Wi-Fi. Going through this list in order fixes the great majority without anyone having to come out.

CHAPTER 9

Indoor Cameras: Placement and Moving the View

Where you put an indoor camera matters as much as which one you bought.

Good spots

- On a shelf or cabinet, a little above head height, looking toward the doors people use.
- Facing *into* the room, not toward a bright window, which turns faces into dark shapes.
- Where the Wi-Fi is decent: check that the live picture loads quickly from that spot before you settle on it.
- Out of reach of pets and small grandchildren, with the cord tucked away.

Moving a pan-and-tilt camera

1. Open the camera's live view in the Tapo app.
2. Look for the on-screen control pad (often a circle with arrows), or drag your finger across the picture, depending on your model and app version.
3. Nudge it left, right, up or down until you see what you want.
4. Many models let you save that view as a favorite position, so one tap brings it back.

HEADS UP

Think about privacy at home

A camera in a shared living space sees family and visitors too. Tell guests it's there, keep cameras out of bedrooms and bathrooms, and use privacy mode when everyone's home (Chapter 19).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One well-placed pan-and-tilt camera can keep an eye on a whole room, a pet, or a parent who lives alone (with their blessing), without a second camera.

CHAPTER 10

Outdoor Cameras: Mounting and Weather

Outdoor Tapo cameras are built for rain and snow, but a few choices make them work much better.

Height and angle

- Mount high enough that it's hard to reach and knock aside, but low enough to see faces, usually around the top of a first-floor door frame or under the eave.
- Point slightly downward. Pointing straight out at the street mostly records passing cars.
- Keep the sun out of the lens at sunrise and sunset if you can.

Weatherproof ratings

Outdoor cameras list an **IP rating**. IP65 means protected against low-pressure water jets, IP66 against powerful jets, and IP67 against brief dunking in water. Any of these is fine under an Ohio eave; none means you should aim a hose at it.

Power and Wi-Fi outside

- Plug-in outdoor cameras need an outdoor outlet, ideally a GFCI outlet with a weatherproof cover.
- Use only cords rated for outdoor use, and don't chain extension cords together.
- Check the live view from the mounting spot *before* drilling holes. Brick and siding weaken Wi-Fi.

STAY SAFE

Ladders and wiring

Have a second person hold the ladder, and don't stand on the top rungs. If mounting means new wiring or a new outlet, that's a job for a licensed electrician.

TIP

Respect the neighbors

Aim the camera at your own property. Avoid pointing it into a neighbor's windows or yard.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A camera mounted at the right height and angle records the faces and packages you care about, not hours of trees blowing in the wind.

PART 3

Recording & Watching

Live view and motion alerts, recording for free to a memory card, finding old video, and whether the paid Tapo Care plan is worth it.

CHAPTER 11

Live View and Motion Alerts

Live view is the camera's picture right now. **Detection** is the camera noticing something and telling you. Getting the alerts right is what makes a camera useful instead of annoying.

Watching live

1. Open the Tapo app. Your cameras appear on the Home screen.
2. Tap a camera to open its live view.
3. Turn your phone sideways for a bigger picture.
4. To talk through the camera, if it has a speaker, press and hold the microphone button and speak.

Turning on motion and person alerts

Tapo and Kasa cameras can notice **motion**, and many models can tell a **person** from other movement; some also recognize pets, vehicles or a baby crying. Which ones you see depends on your model.

1. Open the camera's live view and tap the **gear** icon for its settings.
2. Find **Detection** (on some versions, **Detection & Alerts**).
3. Turn on the detection types you want, such as Motion Detection and Person Detection.
4. Turn on **Notifications** so your phone gets a message when something is detected. The camera's **Alarm** (a siren or light on some models) is a separate switch; leave it off unless you want it.
5. Use the **sensitivity** setting if you get too many or too few alerts.

> TIP
>
> **Too many alerts?**
>
> Choose **Person** instead of plain motion, lower the sensitivity a notch, and draw an activity zone so the camera ignores the street. The "Ways to Make Life Easier" topic shows how to set zones.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Well-tuned alerts mean your phone buzzes for the mail carrier and the grandkids arriving, not for every passing car and swaying branch.

CHAPTER 12

Recording to a microSD Card

Most Tapo and Kasa cameras have a slot for a **microSD card**, a memory card about the size of a fingernail. With one inside, the camera keeps its own recordings, and you can watch them in the app with no monthly fee.

Which card to buy

Question	Answer
Size	TP-Link says Tapo cameras and hubs take cards up to 512 GB, and Kasa cameras up to 256 GB. The exact limit depends on your model; check its product page.
Speed	At least **Class 10 / U1 / V10** (look for these marks on the card).
Type	A **High Endurance**, **Max Endurance** or **Pro Endurance** card, made for constant recording, is TP-Link's strong recommendation for cameras.
Cards to skip	TP-Link lists ADATA A1 V10 cards and the Samsung 256 GB EVO Plus as not working with Tapo and Kasa cameras.
Beware fakes	TP-Link says counterfeit and low-quality cards are a common cause of cards that won't format or aren't recognized. Buy from a known store.

Putting it in and formatting it

1. Unplug the camera (or switch off a battery camera).
2. Find the slot. On pan-and-tilt cameras it's often hidden: tilt the lens all the way up to reveal it. On outdoor and battery models, it's under a rubber flap or cover.
3. Push the card in gently, label side as shown on the camera, until it clicks.
4. Plug the camera back in and open its settings in the Tapo app.
5. Find **Storage & Recording** (or similar) and tap **Format**. The camera prepares the card itself, so you don't need a computer.
6. Under **Recording Schedule**, choose how to record: **continuous** (all the time, plug-in cameras only), **detection** (only when something happens), a schedule you set, or none.

HEADS UP

Formatting erases the card

Formatting wipes everything on the card. Do it when the card is new, or when you're sure you don't need the old recordings.

How much does it hold?

It depends on the card's size, the camera's resolution and whether it records all the time or only on detection. As a rough guide, a larger card recording around the clock holds weeks of video, and detection-only recording stretches that much further. When the card fills, the camera normally records over the **oldest** video automatically, so you never have to empty it.

GOOD TO KNOW

The catch with a memory card

The card is inside the camera. If someone steals the camera, the recording goes with it. That's the main reason some people add cloud recording (Chapter 14).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

An inexpensive card can give you weeks of recordings with no subscription at all. For many households, that's all they ever need.

CHAPTER 13

Finding and Saving a Recording

Something happened at 3 o'clock, and you'd like to see it. Here's the general routine. The button names shift a little between app versions.

1. Open the camera's live view in the Tapo app.
2. Look for **Playback** (sometimes **Playback & Download**), or tap the alert you received.
3. Choose the day from the calendar.
4. Slide the timeline with your finger to the time you want. Marked stretches show detected events.
5. Tap **Play**. Use the scissors or download button, if your app shows one, to save a clip to your phone.

TIP

Save important clips right away

Memory cards record over the oldest video, and cloud plans keep clips only for a set number of days. If something matters, a package theft or a fender-bender, download the clip to your phone the same day.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing how to jump to the right minute means you can answer "Did the package come?" or "What was that noise?" in under a minute.

CHAPTER 14

Tapo Care: Do You Need It?

Tapo Care is TP-Link's optional paid service. It saves your camera's recordings to TP-Link's online storage (the "cloud"), so they're safe even if the camera is stolen or the card fails, and it adds extra features. Your camera works without it.

U.S. plans and prices, as of November 2026

TP-Link has renamed its plans (older names were Basic and Premium). Its U.S. Tapo Care pages listed these monthly prices:

Plan	Price	Covers	Video kept
Cloud	$3.49/month	Up to 2 cameras	30 days
Cloud Advanced	$11.99/month	Unlimited cameras	180 days
Cloud Advanced AI	$19.99/month	Unlimited, plus AI features	180 days

The AI plan adds features such as summaries of what happened, searching your videos by describing them, and a chat assistant TP-Link calls **Aireal**, which it is rolling out gradually. Most new users can get a 30-day free trial. TP-Link notes that plans and prices vary by region and promotion, and can differ between the app and the website, so the price shown in your app is the one that counts. Yearly billing is offered on some plans; check the app for those prices. If you already pay for an older plan, look in the app to see what you're on before changing anything.

Who really needs it

- **Probably yes:** outdoor cameras where theft is a worry, battery cameras with no memory card, or anyone who wants video kept off-site.
- **Probably not:** one or two indoor cameras for checking on the dog or the house, with a memory card inside.

HEADS UP

Free trials turn into payments

Trials usually renew automatically. Put a reminder on your calendar a few days before the 30 days end, and cancel if you don't want it (Chapter 15).

SCAM ALERT

"Your camera subscription has expired" emails

Scammers send fake renewal and "payment failed" emails with links. Don't tap them. Open the Tapo app yourself and look under **Me** > **Tapo Care** to see your real status.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing exactly what the plan costs and covers lets you decide calmly, instead of being pushed by a pop-up the day you set up the camera.

CHAPTER 15

Starting, Changing or Canceling Tapo Care

Your Tapo Care plan belongs to your TP-Link ID, not to one camera. You manage it from the app.

Seeing and changing your plan

1. Open the Tapo app and tap **Me** (bottom right or top left, depending on the app version).
2. Tap **Tapo Care**. You'll see your current plan and which cameras are on it.
3. To add a camera to the plan, choose it from the list there.
4. To upgrade or downgrade, choose the new plan and pick monthly or yearly billing.

Canceling

How you cancel depends on where you paid. If you subscribed through Apple's App Store, cancel in your iPhone's **Settings** under your name and **Subscriptions**. If you paid through Google Play, cancel in the Play Store under **Payments & subscriptions**. If you paid on TP-Link's website or in the app directly, cancel in **Me** > **Tapo Care**. Deleting the app does **not** cancel a subscription.

TIP

Canceled by mistake?

You can subscribe again from **Me** > **Tapo Care**. Clips that were deleted when the plan ended don't come back, so download anything important before canceling.

GOOD TO KNOW

Resetting a camera doesn't cancel the plan

TP-Link notes that a reset doesn't cancel Tapo Care, since the plan is tied to your ID. After setting the camera up again, add it back under Me > Tapo Care.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing where the plan lives means no surprise charges, and no paying for a camera you gave away.

PART 4

Kasa Cameras & the Tapo App

Bringing older Kasa cameras into the Tapo app, and what happens to a Kasa Care plan and old recordings when you do.

CHAPTER 16

Moving Kasa Cameras into the Tapo App

If you have Kasa cameras (and perhaps Kasa plugs or switches too), TP-Link now lets you see them in the Tapo app. You don't have to set anything up again; the app links the two accounts.

Before you start

- Both apps must be signed in with the **same TP-Link ID**. Open the Kasa app and check which email it uses; sign in to Tapo with that same email.
- Update both apps from the App Store or Google Play.
- If you have a Kasa Care plan, read Chapter 17 first.

Linking the apps

1. Open the Tapo app and tap **Me**.
2. Tap **Link Tapo with Kasa**.
3. Follow the prompts to confirm.
4. Your Kasa devices appear in Tapo under **All Devices**. They work as before; nothing needs to be reset or reconnected.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep the Kasa app for now

Don't delete the Kasa app right away. Old Kasa cloud recordings stay viewable only in the Kasa app (Chapter 17).

TIP

Features may look a little different

Some Kasa cameras may not offer every Tapo feature in the Tapo app. If a setting you used in Kasa is missing in Tapo, check the Kasa app or ask me.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One app for every camera in the house: one place for alerts, one place to look, and one less app on the phone eventually.

CHAPTER 17

Kasa Care, Tapo Care and Your Old Clips

Kasa had its own paid plan, **Kasa Care**. It's separate from Tapo Care, and that matters when you move into the Tapo app.

Question	Answer
Does Kasa Care move to Tapo Care?	No. TP-Link says a remaining Kasa Care subscription can't be transferred to Tapo.
What about old cloud clips?	Kasa cloud history doesn't move either. Watch it in the Kasa app, or download the clips you want to keep.
Can I put Kasa cameras on Tapo Care?	Yes. TP-Link's advice is to turn off Kasa Care's automatic renewal, let the current period run out, then subscribe to Tapo Care.

A sensible order

1. Link Kasa to Tapo (Chapter 16) and check that your Kasa cameras show live video in Tapo.
2. In the Kasa app, download any old cloud clips you want to keep.
3. Turn off Kasa Care's auto-renewal, wherever you pay for it (the Kasa app, Apple or Google).
4. When the Kasa Care period ends, decide whether you want Tapo Care at all (Chapter 14). A memory card may be enough.

HEADS UP

Don't pay twice

Running Kasa Care and Tapo Care side by side for the same cameras is an easy way to pay double. Check your App Store or Google Play subscriptions list once a year.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Following this order keeps every clip you care about and avoids paying for two plans that do the same job.

PART 5

Family, Privacy & Voice

Sharing cameras with the people you trust, switching a camera off with privacy mode, and watching on an Echo Show or Google Nest Hub.

CHAPTER 18

Sharing Cameras with Family

You can let a spouse, an adult child or a trusted neighbor see your cameras on their own phone, without giving them your password. TP-Link calls this **Device Sharing**.

What the other person needs

They need the Tapo app and their **own** TP-Link ID (Chapter 6). They can make one in a minute by tapping **Sign Up** in the app. Ask them for the email address they used.

Sending the invitation

1. In the Tapo app, tap **Me** > **Device Sharing** and choose the camera.
2. Enter the other person's TP-Link ID (their email address).
3. If your app offers a choice of permission, pick one (see below).
4. Send the invitation.
5. On their phone, they open the Tapo app, tap the **bell** icon at the top right of the Home screen, and tap **Accept**. TP-Link gives them **24 hours**; after that, you send a new invitation.

How much can they do?

TP-Link is rolling out a newer version, **Device Sharing 2.0**, that lets the owner choose a level: **Live View Only** (just watching, for cameras and doorbells), **Basic**, or **Advanced** (nearly everything the owner can do, except sharing or removing the camera). If you don't see these choices yet, your account hasn't received the update; check **Me** > **Device Sharing**. The person you invite needs an up-to-date Tapo app to accept the newer levels.

Stopping sharing

As the owner, you can remove someone's access any time, under **Me** > **Device Sharing** or in the camera's settings. It takes effect right away.

HEADS UP

Share, don't hand over your password

It's tempting to just tell a family member your TP-Link password. Don't. Sharing gives them their own access that you can switch off, and keeps two-step verification (Chapter 23) working properly.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Your daughter in another state can glance at the porch camera when you're traveling, and you can take that access away with one tap when you're home.

CHAPTER 19

Privacy Mode: Turning the Camera Off for a While

Privacy Mode tells a Tapo or Kasa camera to stop streaming and stop recording, both picture and sound, until you turn it back off. It's the simplest way to have a camera in the living room without feeling watched when you're home.

Three ways to turn it on

1. **From live view:** open the camera in the Tapo app and tap the **Privacy** button (often an eye or a lock icon).
2. **From settings:** tap the **gear** icon on the camera's page and switch on **Privacy Mode**.
3. **With a button on the camera:** some models have a physical privacy button or shutter that covers the lens or turns it out of sight, so you can see for yourself it's off. Your quick-start card says whether yours does.

To turn privacy mode off, do the same thing again.

HEADS UP

While it's on, nothing is recorded

Privacy mode means no live view, no recordings and no alerts from that camera. That's the point, but remember to turn it back off when you leave the house.

TIP

Pan-and-tilt cameras that look away

On pan-and-tilt models, privacy mode often turns the lens down or into the body, so the camera is visibly "asleep". It's reassuring for guests, too.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You get a camera that watches the house while you're away and truly stops while you're home: no unplugging, no tape over the lens.

CHAPTER 20

Watching on an Amazon Echo Show

If you have an Echo Show (an Alexa device with a screen) or a Fire TV, you can ask Alexa to show a Tapo or Kasa camera. It's handy for a quick look at the front door without finding your phone.

Linking Tapo to Alexa

1. Open the **Amazon Alexa** app, find **Skills**, search for **Tapo** (or **Kasa** for cameras still in the Kasa app), and tap **Enable**. Some versions of the Tapo app can start this for you from the **Me** page.
2. Sign in with your TP-Link ID and allow access. This links your TP-Link and Amazon accounts.
3. Open the **Amazon Alexa** app and check that your cameras appear under **Devices** > **Cameras**. If not, ask Alexa to discover devices.

Using it

- Say **"Alexa, show me the Front Porch"** (use your camera's name).
- Say **"Alexa, hide the Front Porch"** to stop.
- The picture stops on its own after about **10 minutes**; just ask again. TP-Link explains that the picture travels through its cloud and Amazon's, so it uses internet data. Watching in the Tapo app at home isn't limited this way.

GOOD TO KNOW

No screen, no picture

An Echo Dot or other speaker without a screen can't show video. If Alexa says live view isn't supported, check that you're asking a device with a screen, and that your camera model supports it.

TIP

If the picture won't load

Check that live view works in the Tapo app first. If it does, turn the Tapo skill off and back on in the Alexa app.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

When the doorbell rings, you can see who's there from the kitchen counter with a sentence, no phone, no glasses.

CHAPTER 21

Watching on a Google Nest Hub or Chromecast

Google's screens work in much the same way: link the accounts once, then ask.

1. Open the **Google Home** app and tap the **+** (Add) button, then set up a device that "Works with Google".
2. Search for **Tapo** (or **Kasa** for cameras still in the Kasa app) and choose it.
3. Sign in with your TP-Link ID and allow access.
4. Say **"Hey Google, show me the Front Porch"** to a Nest Hub, or to a TV with Chromecast.

As with Alexa, the stream stops after about 10 minutes; just ask again. Watching this way goes through the internet, so it uses some of your internet data.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not every view is supported

Live view inside the Google Home *app* on your phone may not work for every camera; a Nest Hub screen is the more dependable way. Use the Tapo app on your phone for full features.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

If the family already has a Nest Hub in the kitchen, it becomes a camera screen too, at no extra cost.

PART 6

Keeping It Safe & Up to Date

Firmware updates, two-step verification and the scams that use TP-Link's name, what's really in the news about TP-Link, and resetting or giving away a camera.

CHAPTER 22

Firmware Updates

Firmware is the small program that runs inside the camera itself. TP-Link sends updates from time to time to fix problems, close security holes and sometimes add features. Keeping it current is one of the easiest things you can do to keep a camera safe.

Updating one camera

1. Open the Tapo app and tap the camera on the Home screen.
2. Tap the **gear** icon to open its settings.
3. Tap **Firmware Update**. If a new version is ready, tap **Update**.
4. Wait. The camera may restart and go offline for a few minutes. That's normal.

Checking all your devices at once

Tap **Me** > **Firmware Update**. The app checks every Tapo and Kasa device on your account and lists the ones with an update waiting.

Letting it update on its own

Many models offer **Auto Update** in the same Firmware Update screen, where you can choose a time of day for updates to run, such as the middle of the night. TP-Link says support for Auto Update varies by model, so if you don't see the switch, your camera doesn't offer it; just check by hand every month or two.

HEADS UP

Don't unplug it during an update

TP-Link warns not to power off a device while its firmware updates. Start updates when you won't need the camera for ten minutes, and leave it alone until it's back online.

TIP

Keep the app current too

Update the Tapo app itself from the App Store or Google Play now and then. New features and fixes, such as the newer sharing levels in Chapter 18, often need both a current app and current firmware.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Up-to-date firmware closes the doors that criminals look for. Turning on Auto Update means you never have to remember to do it.

CHAPTER 23

Keeping Your Account Safe

Your cameras are only as safe as the TP-Link ID that controls them. Anyone who knows your email and password could watch your cameras from anywhere. Two simple habits close that door.

Habit 1: a strong, unique password

- Use a password you don't use for anything else, especially not your email.
- Longer is stronger: three or four unrelated words strung together are easy to remember and hard to guess.
- Write it in a safe place at home, or keep it in a password manager.
- To change it, tap **Me**, then the account icon, and look for the password option.

Habit 2: turn on two-step verification

Two-step verification means that when someone signs in to your account on a new phone or tablet, they also need a short code sent to a phone you already trust (or to your email). A thief with only your password is stuck.

1. In the Tapo app, open **Me**. (It's at the bottom right or the top left, depending on your app version.)
2. Tap the **account icon** at the top left.
3. Tap **Login Security**.
4. Turn on **Two-Step Verification**.
5. From now on, signing in on a new device asks for a code. It normally arrives as a notification in the Tapo app on your trusted phone; email is the backup.

The list of phones and tablets you trust is under **Login Security** > **Trusted Devices**. Removing one there signs it out right away. Do that for an old phone you've given away or traded in.

HEADS UP

A code you didn't ask for

If a verification code arrives and you weren't signing in, someone may have your password. TP-Link's advice is to change your password right away, and not to reuse it anywhere else. Never read the code to anyone who calls you.

TIP

Codes not arriving?

Make sure the Tapo app is allowed to send notifications, check your internet connection, update the app, and look in your spam folder for the email. Request a code only once, then wait a few minutes.

Scams that use TP-Link's name

SCAM ALERT

Fake support numbers

Scammers buy search ads and build websites that look like TP-Link support. TP-Link's official U.S. support number is **866-225-8139**, and its website is **tp-link.com/us**. TP-Link says it doesn't charge for support, and its agents generally won't ask to take control of your computer. Anyone who asks for a payment, gift cards or remote access is not TP-Link.

SCAM ALERT

"Someone is watching your camera" messages

A pop-up, email or call warning that your camera has been hacked, with a number to call or a link to tap, is a scare tactic. Check for yourself: open the Tapo app, look at **Trusted Devices**, change your password if you're worried, and call someone you trust.

If you already gave out a code or password

1. Change your TP-Link ID password from the Tapo app on your own phone.
2. Turn on two-step verification if it wasn't on, and remove any trusted device you don't recognize.
3. If you paid a fake support line by card, call the number on the back of your card.
4. Report it at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Five minutes on these settings means the only people looking through your cameras are the ones you invited.

CHAPTER 24

TP-Link in the News: What It Means for You

You may have seen headlines about TP-Link and the U.S. government. Here's what I could confirm from official sources as of November 2026, stated plainly, along with the changes TP-Link itself has announced for Tapo.

The government news is mostly about routers

- On **March 23, 2026**, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) added consumer **routers** made in foreign countries to its **Covered List**. This applies to many brands, not just TP-Link, and it is about routers, not cameras.
- The FCC says people already using these routers at home don't need to do anything, and routers that already had approval can still be sold and used.
- News outlets reported in late 2025 that the Commerce Department had proposed restricting TP-Link sales in the U.S., and TP-Link disputed the concerns. I couldn't find an official final decision on that proposal as of November 2026.

What TP-Link has announced for Tapo

- **New plan names.** Tapo Care's plans are now called Cloud, Cloud Advanced and Cloud Advanced AI (Chapter 14).
- **An AI assistant called Aireal.** TP-Link introduced Aireal at the CES trade show in January 2026. For U.S. Tapo users it comes through a Tapo Care subscription and is rolling out gradually.
- **Kasa into Tapo.** Kasa devices can now be linked into the Tapo app (Chapter 16).

FROM BILL

My plain advice

There's no reason to take down a working Tapo or Kasa camera because of headlines. Keep the firmware current (Chapter 22), use a strong password with two-step verification (Chapter 23), and keep an eye on whether updates keep coming. If you're buying new cameras and the news worries you, that's a reasonable thing to weigh, and I'm glad to talk it through.

HEADS UP

Headlines change

Government decisions can change quickly. If you hear something new, look for it on the FCC's own website or TP-Link's newsroom, not in a forwarded message or a social-media post.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Separating the facts from the noise lets you decide calmly, instead of throwing out good equipment or ignoring a real change.

CHAPTER 25

Resetting, Removing or Giving Away a Camera

Before a camera leaves your home, whether it's going to a grandchild, a yard sale or the recycling center, take it off your account and wipe it. Otherwise it may still be linked to you.

Step 1: remove it from your account

1. Make sure the camera is plugged in and online. The app can only remove a camera that's online.
2. On the Tapo app's Home screen, press and hold the camera's card.
3. Tap the **minus** (remove) icon and confirm.
4. This also disconnects it from Alexa and Google Home.

Step 2: factory reset it

1. With the camera powered on, find the small **reset** button. On pan-and-tilt models, tilt the lens all the way up to see it. On battery models such as the C425, remove the cover.
2. Press and hold the button for about **5 seconds** (some models need 10) until the light blinks red.
3. Let go. The camera restarts by itself with its factory settings.
4. If nothing happens, check it has power, wait 10 minutes and try again.

TIP

Take the memory card out

Recordings live on the microSD card, not on your account. Remove the card before you give a camera away, or format it first (Chapter 12).

GOOD TO KNOW

Tapo Care stays with you

Your Tapo Care plan belongs to your TP-Link ID, not the camera. Removing or resetting a camera doesn't cancel the plan. If you're done with cameras altogether, cancel it as shown in Chapter 15.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A clean reset means the next owner starts fresh, and your account, clips and plan stay yours.

PART 7

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary of your cameras.

CHAPTER 26

When to Call Bill

Most of what's in this guide you can do yourself, at your own pace. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time and worry. Here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **A camera that won't join the Wi-Fi** after you've worked through Chapter 8, especially with a mesh system or one Wi-Fi name for both bands.
- **Planning outdoor cameras**: where they'll reach the Wi-Fi, where the power will come from, and whether battery or plug-in makes more sense for each spot.
- **Untangling accounts** when cameras ended up on different family members' TP-Link IDs, or linking old Kasa cameras into Tapo without losing clips.
- **Deciding about Tapo Care**, and checking you're not paying for two plans at once.
- **Setting up sharing** so an adult child can check on the house, with the right permission level.
- **A message or call you're not sure about**: a "camera hacked" warning, a renewal email, or a support number you found online.
- **A safety check-up**: firmware, passwords and two-step verification on every camera in the house.

What I don't do

I'm a technology helper, not an electrician or an alarm company. If mounting a camera means new wiring or a new outdoor outlet, a licensed electrician should do that part. And no camera replaces calling 911 in an emergency.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace, explain what I'm doing in plain words, and never talk down to anyone. I'll tell you honestly when something isn't worth your money, including a subscription you don't need. I've been doing this kind of work for more than 30 years, and I serve Portage County, Ohio, in person, and folks farther away by remote help.

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 yours to keep for free; if you'd like a hand, I'm only a phone call away.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may meet Sophie first

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you might be greeted by **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time. A real person, me, does the actual help.

Thank you for taking the time to learn your cameras. Start with one, get comfortable, and add more only where they truly help.

— Bill

CHAPTER 27

Your Tapo & Kasa Camera Cheat-Sheet

Keep just this page handy. The whole guide, boiled down.

The essentials

Topic	Remember
Tapo vs. Kasa	Both TP-Link. One TP-Link ID signs in to both apps.
Kasa into Tapo	Tapo app: **Me** > **Link Tapo with Kasa**. Same TP-Link ID in both.
Wi-Fi for setup	2.4 GHz network (no "5G" in the name), correct password, phone near the router, VPN off.
Setup failed	Check band and password, move closer, reset (hold about 5 seconds until it blinks red).
Alerts	Camera **gear** > **Detection**. Person detection and a detection zone cut false alarms.
Memory card	Up to 512 GB (Kasa 256 GB), Class 10/U1 or better, High Endurance type. Format it in the app.
Tapo Care	Optional. From $3.49/month (as of November 2026). Manage in **Me** > **Tapo Care**.
Canceling	Cancel where you paid: Apple, Google Play, or Me > Tapo Care. Deleting the app doesn't cancel.
Sharing	**Me** > **Device Sharing**. They accept within 24 hours.
Privacy mode	Stops video, sound, recording and alerts until you turn it off.
Echo Show / Nest Hub	"Alexa, show me the Porch." Stops after about 10 minutes; ask again.
Firmware	Camera gear > **Firmware Update**, or Me > Firmware Update. Turn on Auto Update.
Two-step verification	**Me** > account icon > **Login Security**.
TP-Link U.S. support	866-225-8139 · tp-link.com/us. Real support never asks for gift cards.

Write it down once

Keep handy	
TP-Link ID (email)	_____
Where I keep the password	_____
Wi-Fi name (2.4 GHz) & password location	_____
Camera 1: name, model, where	_____
Camera 2: name, model, where	_____
Camera 3: name, model, where	_____
Memory card size in each	_____
Tapo Care plan, renewal date & where I pay	_____
People I share with	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Is privacy mode on? Turn it off in the app.
2. Camera shows Offline? Unplug it for ten seconds and plug it back in.
3. Is the internet working on your phone over Wi-Fi? If not, restart the router.
4. Did your Wi-Fi name or password change? Reset the camera and set it up again (Chapter 8).
5. No recordings? Check the memory card in the camera's storage settings, or format it (Chapter 12).
6. Strange messages or a code you didn't request? Change your password (Chapter 23).
7. Still stuck? Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

STAY SAFE

In an emergency

If a camera shows someone breaking in or a fire, call 911 first. Watching the video can wait.