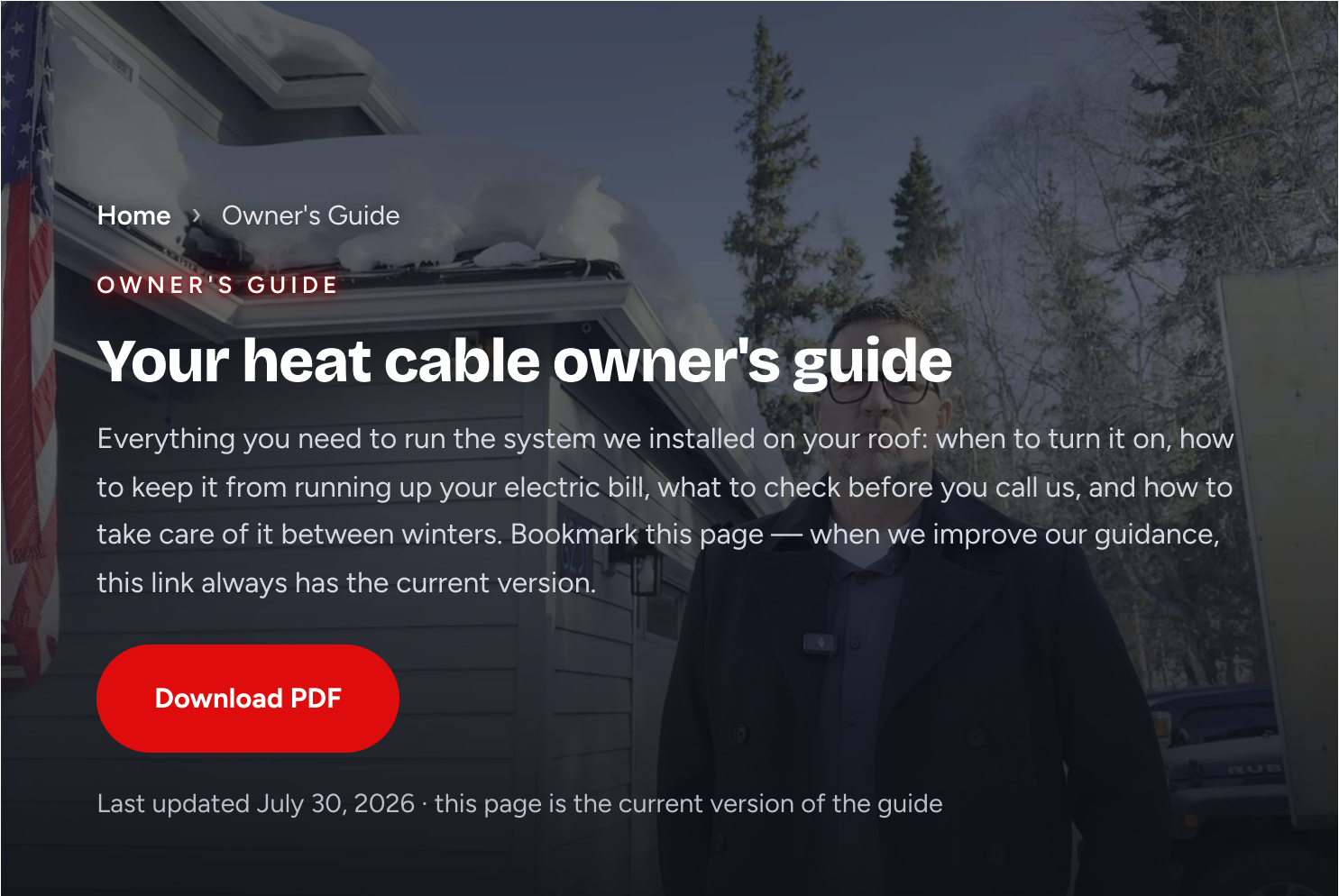




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OWNER'S GUIDE

Your heat cable owner's guide

Everything you need to run the system we installed on your roof: when to turn it on, how to keep it from running up your electric bill, what to check before you call us, and how to take care of it between winters. Bookmark this page — when we improve our guidance, this link always has the current version.

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WHEN TO RUN IT

When to run your system

The short version: the cable should be working when snow and melt are happening, and off when they aren't. Heat cable's job is to keep drainage paths open — through the ice at your roof edge, through the gutters, down the downspouts — so meltwater gets off the roof instead of ponding behind ice. It only needs to be doing that job when there's something to melt.

If you have an automatic sensor controller

You're done — that's what it's for. The controller energizes the system only when it senses both cold and moisture, and stays off during a dry cold snap when there's nothing to melt. Leave it powered and in the setting we left it in, and let it decide.

If you have a thermostat control

It turns the system on around freezing and keeps it running until thaw conditions return. Leave it powered and set where we set it.

If you switch it manually (wall switch, plug, or WiFi)

Run it around snow events. Our customers who do this well turn the system on when snow is in the forecast — a day ahead is plenty — leave it running through the storm and the day or so after, then shut it off once the roof edge is draining and no new snow is coming. In a midwinter thaw, or once spring melt-off is done, it can stay off until the next snow.

In deep cold, less is more. In extremely cold conditions, most of the heat the cable produces is absorbed by the cold roof itself before it can melt anything, so continuous operation consumes electricity for limited practical benefit. During a deep cold snap, run the system only when ice is actively forming — not as a round-the-clock prevention strategy.

If your system shares a circuit with other loads

(We'll have told you at the walkthrough if it does.) Turn the cable on near freezing temperatures rather than in deep cold, switch off the other loads on that circuit while it starts up, give it about 15 minutes to stabilize, then turn the other loads back on. Cold-start current is highest in the first minutes, and this sequence prevents nuisance breaker trips.

KEEPING THE BILL DOWN

Keeping the power bill down

Two things are already built into your system to hold the cost down. The cable itself is self-regulating — it draws less power as the surface it's on warms up, so it isn't heating at full output all winter. And if your system has a sensor controller, it only energizes when there's both cold and moisture, which means it's off during dry cold when there's nothing to melt.

What you can do on top of that:

Don't run it in a dry cold snap.

No snow, no melt, nothing for the cable to do — running it just heats the roof edge for no benefit.

Don't run it continuously through deep cold.

In extreme cold the melt you get per kilowatt drops sharply. Run it when ice is actively forming.

Shut it down for the season once spring melt-off is done.

Start it up again when the first snow is coming next winter.

What it actually costs to run depends on your system's total connected wattage and how often winter triggers it. Your connected wattage is in your quote documents — or call us and we'll tell you — and you can do the math against your own utility rate instead of taking a number on faith.

One honest note: an automatic controller makes the system hands-off, but hands-off isn't automatically cheaper than a disciplined hand on the switch. What the controller buys you is never having to remember — and never coming home from a trip to an ice dam because nobody turned the system on.

Before you call — a two-minute check

First, know what "working" looks like. A running system is quieter than people expect. What actually shows: melted channels through the snow along the cable runs — paths, not a bare roof, and in a valley the channel can tunnel *under* the snow where you can't see it — plus water making it to the gutter, the downspout, or the ground. If your controller has an indicator light, it shows when the system is powered. **Don't judge by touch:** self-regulating cable runs warm, not hot, and in freezing weather a working cable can feel barely warm to a cold hand — manufacturers' own operating manuals list "feels warm" as only a maybe. A system that's working looks like drainage, not like heat.

Most "my cable isn't working" calls come down to one of four things, and you can check all of them from the ground. (One of our customers called certain the system had failed — it was unplugged. It happens to everyone.)

1 Is the breaker on?

Check the breaker serving the cable's circuit, including any GFCI or GFEP breaker — reset it if it's tripped. Outdoor ground-fault devices can nuisance-trip in cold weather; one trip isn't a problem.

But if it trips again right away, stop — leave the system off and call us. A ground-fault breaker that keeps tripping is protecting you from damaged cable, and repeated resetting is the one thing not to do.

2 Is it plugged in?

If your system plugs into a receptacle, make sure it's actually connected — cords get unplugged for holiday lights and pressure washers more often than you'd think.

3 Is the controller powered and set correctly?

The controller needs power to do its job, and it needs to be in the setting we left it in. If it's been switched off or adjusted, put it back.

4 Any visible damage?

From the ground, look for cable hanging loose, kinked, or visibly damaged — after wind, sliding snow, or anyone working on the roof or gutters.

Starting up in deep cold? Expect the breaker to work hardest in the first minutes — cold cable draws its highest current at startup, and starting the system up in very cold weather can trip a breaker even when nothing is wrong. If your system is on a shared circuit, use the startup sequence in [section one](#).

Worth a call to us: visible damage to the cable, a breaker that trips repeatedly, or no sign of melt after sustained cold with the system running. That's not a nuisance call — that's exactly what we asked you to tell us about promptly, and finding it early is what keeps a small problem small.

Your install records — the layout diagram, test readings, and warranty registration — are on file, so a service call starts from a record of what was built, not from scratch.

Call (907) 416-5802

THROUGH THE SEASONS

Through the seasons

Keep gutters and downspouts clear of leaves and debris.

This is the single biggest thing you can do for the system. Leaves act as insulation over the heat cable, so ice forms *above* the cable instead of melting — which blocks drainage and causes overflow. The cable clears ice and snow from drainage paths; it does not clear leaf debris.

If anyone works on your roof or gutters, tell them about the cable.

The cable is not load-rated to be pulled on, hung from, or used as a tie-off — and jacket damage from a gutter cleaner yanking on it voids the manufacturer warranty. One sentence to your gutter-cleaning crew protects a ten-year warranty.

During freeze-thaw swings and heavy snowfall, glance at the roof edge.

Those are the conditions the system works hardest in. What you want to see: drainage paths staying open at the eave, water making it to the ground. A system that's keeping up looks unremarkable — that's the point.

When spring melt-off is done, shut it down.

Once the thaw is underway and the roof edge is staying clear on its own, the season's over — switch it off and it's ready to start up again when the first snow is coming next fall. (Sensor-controlled systems handle this themselves, but it's fine to power down for summer.)

Snow still needs managing in a big year.

Heat cable creates drainage paths — it doesn't remove the snowpack. In a heavy or prolonged snowfall the system can be temporarily overwhelmed; that's physics, not failure. If the snowpack itself needs to come off, that's shoveling, raking, or steam work — call us before anyone gets on the roof near the cable.

A FAVOR, IF IT'S EARNED

How's the system treating you?

If your winter went the way it was supposed to — quiet roof edge, no ice dams, nothing to think about — we'd genuinely appreciate a Google review. Most Anchorage homeowners find us the same way you probably did: other people's reviews.

[Leave a Google review](#)

And if the winter *didn't* go right — if anything about the system disappointed you — call us first: **(907) 416-5802**. We'd rather fix it than explain it.