

Annex H: Power Outage and Utility Failure Response Guide

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A. INTRODUCTION

This Response Guide outlines the appropriate actions that should be taken and which notifications that must be made during a power outage or utility failure. These actions ensure the safety of college employees and students working within college facilities, protect property, and maintain business operations.

B. SCOPE

A utility failure is any disruption in the services necessary for the safe and proper operation of a building to include: electricity, water, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, telephone, and water utilities. A utility failure may be widespread, or limited to a specific building or area within a building. Power and utility outages may be advertised and scheduled in advance to perform preventative maintenance.

C. PREPARATION

Planned utility outages are often delivered in e-mails and/or posted on the affected building. In the event of a utility failure, there are actions that should be taken to protect equipment and assist in the safe evacuation of the affected area.

Staff and Faculty should consider purchasing a battery-powered or windup/hand-crank flashlight and storing it at their work area. Batteries should be changed every 6 months.

Equipment and Data Protection: All sensitive equipment should be connected to a fusible power-strip or surge protector. Some equipment may require an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) system to ensure that the equipment does not sustain damage during a power outage, lose valuable data and does maintain power long enough to power down through a routine or emergency shutdown sequence. Contact the college Department of Technology's Help Desk either by calling 523-5555 or through their website (www.inside.reynolds.edu/) for further assistance.

Sanitation: To conserve water usage and maintain sanitary conditions, occupants should try to limit restroom usage during power outages. Consider using antiseptic wipes or waterless hand sanitizer to disinfect your hands, which can be kept in the office in case of emergency water service outage.

D. RESPONSE PROCEDURES

The following procedures must be followed whenever a critical (i.e. power, water, heating or ventilation and air conditioning) utility failure occurs:

- a. Report the utility failure to the Department of Police (804) 523-5219.
- b. Discontinue all non-essential work until utilities are restored.

- c. If emergency lighting is unavailable:
 - i. Remain calm;
 - ii. Contact The Department of Police (804) 523-5219;
 - iii. Provide your location;
 - iv. Request assistance.

If a building evacuation is ordered due to a utility failure, the building may not be reoccupied until a college official determines that the building is safe for re-occupancy.

If you are ordered to evacuate a building, take all personal belongings (especially your car keys) with you and secure the area before leaving. In the event of a power failure, electronic access systems should remain operational using battery backup for a limited period following the power outage.

Failure to obey an evacuation order may subject you to administrative sanctions and/or arrest.

E. SUSPENSION OF WORK/CLASSES

Authority to suspend and/or cancel work functions will be at the discretion of the College President or designee. Utility outages may demand that all activities within the affected spaces be suspended until utilities are restored.

Many college buildings are equipped with an emergency generator; however, emergency generators are designed to supply power to critical building systems, not to serve as an alternative source of energy to support normal operations.

Evacuation will not occur if the power outage jeopardizes the safety of our community, such as:

- Severe weather,
- Downed power lines adjacent to or blocking building exits,
- A hazardous materials spill or other conditions which makes it unsafe to exit the building.

In these circumstances, you may be moved to a shelter location.

Whenever a power outage or utility failure affects your work area, contact your supervisor or instructor for assistance. Instructors should consider postponing or cancelling classes whenever a utility failure or power outage is expected for the duration of the class. Laboratory classes and laboratory research activities may not be held whenever a power outage or major utility failure occurs.