

POWER OUTAGE AND UTILITY FAILURE GUIDE

A. INTRODUCTION

BRCC's policies and procedures are intended to protect all members of our community while on campus and when participating in college related or sponsored activities. This guide outlines the appropriate actions to take and notifications to be made during a power outage or utility failure. These actions are to ensure the safety of employees and students working within College facilities, protect property, and maintain business operations.

A utility failure is any disruption in the services necessary for the safe and proper operation of a building, including: gas leak, electricity, water, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, telephone, internet, and water utilities. A utility failure may be wide-spread 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.

Activities and operations within the building should be rescheduled or cancelled when critical utilities (i.e. power, water, or heating, ventilation and air conditioning) are out of service.

B. RESPONSE

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

- Report the utility failure to Facilities by calling 540-453-2221.
- Discontinue all non-essential work until utilities are restored.
- Remain in place if there is sufficient ambient light.
- Exit the building if told to do so and safety permits.
- If you need assistance and emergency lighting is unavailable, remain calm, contact the Public Safety Office 540-453-2370, provide your location.
- If a building is evacuated 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 required to evacuate a building, it is suggested that you take all personal belongings 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 of time following the power outage.

Emergency Lighting and Egress: Not all College facilities areas are equipped with emergency lighting or illuminated emergency exit signs. If you work in an area with

no emergency lighting, the department/office should consider purchasing battery or wind-up powered flashlights.

Equipment and Data Protection: All sensitive equipment should be connected to a fusible power strip or relocatable power tap. Some equipment may require an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) system to ensure that it does not sustain damage, lose valuable data, or power down through a routine or emergency shutdown sequence. Set up computers to frequently auto-save data and utilize shared drives, or cloud storage, which are backed up regularly.

Sanitation: To maintain sanitary conditions, restrooms must not be used if there is a disruption in water service. Consider using antiseptic wipes or waterless hand sanitizer to disinfect your hands.

C. SUSPENSION OF WORK

Many life safety systems (i.e., fire suppression and alarm systems, security systems, and emergency lighting) are dependent upon the proper operation of utilities to function. Utility outages demand that all activities within the affected spaces be suspended until utilities are restored.

The Houff Student Center and Bioscience buildings along with the Parking Deck 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. Despite the apparent normal operating condition, all buildings under emergency generator power should be evacuated unless extenuating circumstances exist, such as: severe weather, violence on campus, downed power lines adjacent to or blocking building exits, a hazardous materials spill, or other condition which makes it unsafe to exit the building.

Whenever a power outage or utility failure affects your work area and extends beyond one hour, contact your supervisor or instructor to coordinate a modified schedule if necessary. Supervisors can consider temporary informal telework arrangements, making alternate work arrangements for the duration of the outage, or leave if necessary. 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.