POWER OUTAGE AND UTILITY FAILURE RESPONSE GUIDE

Version	Date	Comments
2	October, 2010	Amendments to section E. Suspension of Work
3	April, 2012	Routine review

A. INTRODUCTION

This Guide outlines the appropriate actions that should be taken and notifications that must be made during a power outage or utility failure. These actions are to ensure the safety of university employees and students working within university 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, 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 whenever critical utilities (i.e. power, water, or heating, ventilation and air conditioning) are out of service.

C. PREPARATION

Planned utility outages are often posted in e-files 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.

Emergency Lighting and Egress: Not all university facilities areas are equipped with emergency lighting or illuminated emergency exit signs. If you work in an area that is not equipped with 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 surge protector. Some equipment may require an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) system to ensure that it does not sustain damage during a power outage, lose valuable data, or maintain power long enough to power down through a routine or emergency shutdown sequence. Setup computers to frequently auto-save data and utilize shared drives such as MESA, which are backed up daily by the Information Technology Unit.

Sanitation: To maintain sanitary conditions, restrooms must not be used whenever a disruption in water service occurs. 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, or heating, ventilation and air conditioning) utility failure occurs:

- Report the utility failure to Facilities Management (703) 993-2525.
- Discontinue all non-essential work until utilities are restored.
- Exit the building and assist employees and students who may not be familiar with evacuation procedures or the building floor plan.
- If it is unsafe to exit the building relocate to an area that has sufficient ambient light to avoid injury such as a lobby or conference room with windows.
- If emergency lighting is unavailable, remain calm, contact University Police (703) 993-2810, provide your location, and request assistance.
- If you are unable to use a cellular phone or desk phone to call for assistance or report a utility failure, locate a fax machine with phone handset. Fax machine phone lines should remain operational during a power outage.
- If a building is evacuated due to a utility failure, the building may not be reoccupied until a university 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 belonging 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.

E. 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.

Many university 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. Despite the apparent normal operating condition, all buildings under emergency generator power should be evacuated unless extenuating circumstances, which jeopardize safety, 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 impacts 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 university 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.