

University of Idaho

Preparing for and Surviving a Power Outage

Services Affected

When the campus loses electrical power, whether it is a single building, a part of campus, or the entire campus, many services of a building may be lost. This can include:

- lighting
- electrical outlets (and the equipment plugged into them)
- telephones
- ventilation, heating and cooling
- fume hoods and biological safety cabinets
- steam
- computer, internet and ITS systems
- sewage systems
- electronic locks

Duration

The duration of a power outage may not be known for up to an hour as Facilities personnel investigate what caused the outage and how long the repairs may take. As soon as this has been determined, the information will be communicated to the university. Please be patient and allow Facilities personnel time to assess the situation.

Impacts and Planning

Electrical power may be lost for a few minutes to a few days. It is important for building occupants to be aware of these possibilities, plan for the short term and long term impacts a power outage will have on their activities, and to safely evacuate buildings when required. These procedures must be included in their Unit Emergency Management Plan.

A power outage can impact the occupancy of a building, classes being held, campus events, the operations of an office, scientific research being conducted, food services, operation of the Steam Plant (for providing heating and cooling to the campus), telephone services, and connection to the internet and the university's ITS systems.

Unit administrators need to ensure that procedures for how a power outage will be addressed are included in their Unit Emergency Management Plan. These plans should include procedures for evacuation, personnel relocation, back-up of data systems and availability of data back-up at an off-campus location, and communication with unit personnel after evacuation.

Researchers must be aware that a power outage will result in loss of fume hoods and biological safety cabinets. Personnel must immediately evacuate a building when these conditions occur. If it safe to do so, containers may be capped, valves closed, operations stopped, etc. if this will reduce the potential hazards of your research during a power outage. However, if it is not safe do so, do not ever endanger yourself; evacuate immediately. If there are situations that may become imminent or serious hazards, please communicate this information to your unit administrator, unit evacuation coordinator, first responder, Environmental Health and Safety, and/or Facilities.

Communications

When power is lost, several forms of communications may also be lost. Computers, and consequently electronic mail and the internet, may not work or be available. Campus wireless systems and cordless phones may not operate. It is recommended that units keep several corded phones available for use during a power outage as telephone lines should still operate if power is lost to the campus.

Depending on how widespread the power outage is, cell phones may or may not work. Units must develop procedures on how they will communicate with their personnel during these situations.

The university's emergency notification system will provide periodic updates of the situation. Notification is sent via several modes, including electronic mail, internet, phones, and cell phones. Again, if the power outage is widespread, the emergency notification system may not be functional.

Evacuation of Buildings

Many campus buildings have emergency power systems in anticipation of a power outage. These systems consist of emergency generators or battery-powered devices and they typically power emergency lighting and exit lights. In some buildings, certain electrical outlets are on the back up power system and were installed to provide power to devices such as ultra-cold freezers. Except in rare, isolated areas, emergency power does not operate fume hoods, biological safety cabinets or building ventilation systems. Buildings using and/or storing hazardous materials can present a serious health hazard if power is lost and the ventilation systems fail.

The buildings below have been color-coded based on their use of hazardous materials and their emergency power systems:

- ❖ **Red** - indicates this building uses hazardous materials and loss of power can present a serious health hazard. Occupants must evacuate these buildings immediately.
- ❖ **Yellow** - indicates that hazardous materials are not used significantly in this building and the building has battery-powered emergency lighting. Immediate evacuation is not critical but must occur within 30 minutes as the batteries powering the lighting will wear down.
- ❖ **Green** - indicates that hazardous materials are not used significantly in this building and the building has an emergency generator supplying emergency power. It may be acceptable to continue to occupy these buildings for several hours. Be aware that the ventilation systems in these buildings will not be operable and, over time, the building may become colder or warmer and/or air quality will start to degrade. At this point evacuation may become necessary.

Unit Emergency Management Plans must state the evacuation procedures required based on the information provided in the following tables. Depending on the duration of the outage and the weather, it may be acceptable to remain outside or it may be necessary to re-locate to a green color-coded building or other location approved by the unit administrator.

	<p>Buildings on this list have been identified as using and/or storing hazardous materials that can present a safety hazard if electrical power is lost.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupants must evacuate these building immediately during a power outage. • Fume hoods, biological safety cabinets, and ventilation systems will not work. • Facilities personnel will assist in locking and signing the exterior doors of the building. • It is the unit administrator's responsibility to ensure everyone evacuates the building and that personnel do not re-enter the building until allowed to do so. • After power has been re-established to the building, occupants are to wait 30 minutes before entering the building in order to allow the ventilation systems to clear the building of any possible hazardous fumes.
	Agricultural Biotechnology Building
	Agricultural Sciences Building
	Buchanan Engineering Laboratory (BEL)
	Chemical Storage - Facilities
	College of Natural Resources (CNR)
	Engineering Annex
	Engineering/Physics Building
	Food Research Center
	Gauss-Johnson Engineering Building
	Gibb Hall
	Hazardous Materials Storage Building
	Holm Center
	J.W. Martin Laboratory
	Life Sciences South (LSS)
	McClure Hall
	Mines Building
	Pesticide Storage Building
	Renfrew Hall

	<p>Buildings on this list have been identified as not using and/or storing significant amounts of hazardous materials and have battery-powered emergency lighting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuation must take place within 30 minutes as the batteries powering the lighting will wear down. • For single story buildings, if it is daylight, and the space has a window(s), and adequate ventilation can be maintained, it may be acceptable to continue to occupy the space.
	Agricultural Extension & Education Building
	Agricultural Publications Building
	Aquaculture Institute
	Art & Architecture Building
	Art & Architecture East
	Art & Architecture - Interior Design
	Art & Architecture North
	Art & Architecture South
	Blake House (Steel House)
	Bookstore/Post Office
	Business Technology Incubator
	Campus Police Substation
	College of Education
	Early Childhood Center
	Environmental Health & Safety
	Forney Hall (Continuing Education Building)
	Garage - Facilities
	Graduate Art Studio (GAS House)
	Golf Clubhouse
	Greenhouse (Sixth Street)
	Hartung Theatre
	Hays Hall (Alumni Center)
	Human Resources
	Industrial Arts Buildings
	Janssen Engineering Building
	Lionel Hampton School of Music
	Menard Law Building
	Morrill Hall
	Native American/Migrant Education Center
	Navy Building
	Niccolls Home Economics Building
	North Campus Center
	Office of Development
	Physical Education Building (PEB)
	Radio-TV Center
	Recycling/Surplus - Facilities
	Ridenbaugh Hall
	Shoup Hall
	Small Engine Shop - Facilities
	South Hill Community Center
	Student Health Center
	Swimming Center
	Targhee Hall
	Track Storage and Restrooms
	University Recycling

	Buildings on this list have been identified as not using and/or storing significant amounts of hazardous materials and have emergency generators supplying emergency power. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People may continue to occupy these buildings. • Be aware that the ventilation systems in these buildings will not be operable and, over time, the building may become colder or warmer and/or air quality will start to degrade. • Please note buildings for which the basement restrooms must not be used. • NG - natural gas-fired generator, D - diesel-fired generator
NG	Administration Building
D	ASUI-Kibbie Activity Center
NG	Brink Hall
NG	Facilities Services
NG	J.A. Albertson Building ➤ Must not use basement restrooms
NG	Idaho Commons
NG	Library
NG	Living and Learning Community - All Buildings
NG	McConnell Hall ➤ Must not use basement restrooms
NG	Memorial Gym
NG	Phinney Hall
D	Steam Plant
NG	Student Recreation Center
NG	Student Union/Financial Aid Building ➤ Must not use basement restrooms
NG	Teaching and Learning Center
NG	Theophilus Tower ➤ Must not use basement restrooms
D	Wallace Residence Center ➤ Must not use basement restrooms

Facilities Located Outside of Moscow

University facilities located outside of Moscow will need to determine their procedures in the event of a power outage. Risk Management and Environmental Health and Safety may be contacted for assistance in determining the appropriate procedures needed for you facility.