

	<h2>Power Outages</h2>	Effective:	February 06, 2006
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		Updated by	T. J. Kendrick

1. Purpose:

To familiarize people with the effects and precautions to be taken during power outages.

2. Scope:

These guidelines apply to all faculty, staff and students on campus.

3. Procedure

Due to the ongoing electrical energy crisis, power outages could be expected to occur throughout the year. It is important to plan ahead in case the power supply on campus is disrupted. By being prepared, you can prevent injury to yourself or your co-workers, and prevent damage to university facilities and equipment. Offices and laboratories located in the center of buildings, without outside windows, are particularly vulnerable. Make sure flashlights or battery-operated light sources are readily available and that all employees know where they are located. Departments may consider installing battery-operated emergency lighting in interior offices and labs.

The following actions should be taken when the power goes out:

- Shut off computer equipment, printers, copy machines and other electronic equipment. There may be a power surge when the power is restored that could damage electrical equipment left in the “on” position.
- During extremes of outside temperature, keep windows and blinds closed as much as possible to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature. See [SafetyWeb #00](#), Building Temperature Extremes, for more information.
- When the ventilation system goes off, opening office or lab doors to the hallway can improve air circulation. If the outside temperatures are mild, opening outside windows (where available) and doors will help.

In laboratories:

- Stop work and close, cover or otherwise contain and secure the materials you are using.
- Stop work in fume hoods or biosafety cabinets as soon as possible and close the sash, even if the hood appears to be working.
- Make sure cabinet doors and flammable storage cabinets are secure.
- If you are working with materials at reduced or increased temperature or pressure, know the steps to safely relieve or maintain the system to prevent an uncontrolled reaction or release.
- Avoid opening refrigerators or freezers. The internal temperature will be maintained longer if the doors are kept closed.

Many laboratory buildings have emergency generators. These generators will come on automatically in the event of a power failure. However, the generators are designed to operate only specific equipment and not to maintain normal operation of the building. Some buildings have special outlets for critical equipment that will be powered by a generator. If you feel you have equipment or processes that will cause a hazard in the event of a power outage, try to determine if there is emergency power available, or contact Facilities for assistance.

If the power goes out due to a planned “rolling blackout”, campus administrators will do their best to provide as much notice as possible of an impending outage, however, advance notice may not be provided by the utility operators. Currently, “rolling blackouts” are expected to last less than two hours, but may last as long as four hours. The decision whether or not to release employees during a power outage is up to the management of each individual department.