

Power Outage Procedures in UBC Libraries

The following procedures apply to unplanned power outages at UBC Vancouver campus libraries. Other procedures may apply at other locations or in the event of planned power outages.

A) Planning: measures to minimize the impact of a power outage

1. Individual library branches should develop emergency plans in the event of service disruption or major incident. Include a list of key phone contacts for the Head and other supervisors.
2. Supervisors should ensure that flashlights (with spare batteries) and/or fluorescent glow sticks are on hand in case emergency lighting is not available. The Unit Safety Committees may help manage this.
3. Supervisors should incorporate power outage procedures into regular emergency drills. Know how to get to the fire exits.
4. Identify in advance any computers or equipment that will need to be turned off in the event of a power outage - for example, appliances that might overheat when power comes back on. Note that in most cases computers do not need to be turned off.
5. In cases where a power outage is planned, it is best to turn off all affected equipment when possible. This includes staff computers, public workstations, printers, copiers, etc. For most electronic equipment, a sudden loss of power has the potential to cause damage.
6. Units with public OPACs might experience some problems when trying to turn these back on. In most cases, a hard boot (completely turning the power off and on) should take care of the problem.
7. Any persistent problems with equipment after restoration of power should be reported to the Library's Technical Help Desk.

B) What to do during a power outage

1. Check to make sure your colleagues are safe. Include a check of elevators and any areas of wheelchair refuge.
2. Determine if the outage is isolated to your building or more widespread. This can be done by a quick visual check for lights in surrounding buildings:
 - If the *outage is isolated to your building*, call Building Operations Trouble Calls (604-822-2173) to place a report
 - If the *outage appears to affect a large number of buildings*, do not call Trouble Calls or Campus Security unless you have an emergency (e.g. elevator entrapment). Widespread outages can be quickly identified by Utilities staff. A large volume of reports can overwhelm phone lines and prevent emergency calls from getting through.

If you urgently require update information on an outage, your Branch/Unit Head should contact the Building Operations Facilities Manager responsible for the Branch's zone. Note that it likely will take UBC Utilities at least 15 minutes to identify the cause of any particular electrical disruption and estimate the approximate restoration time.

Evacuation

During the daytime when there is adequate interior light and most staff are working:

1. If the outage lasts longer than 15 minutes, organize the evacuation of users and staff. Emergency lighting in most buildings is powered by battery packs which last only 20 to 30 minutes. Buildings with diesel powered back-up (e.g. Irving K. Barber Learning Centre) should also be evacuated.
2. Evacuated staff at each unit should congregate at a designated location, using the same gathering place designated for fire evacuation. Each Unit is responsible for identifying its own gathering place. Staff should stay there pending further instructions. They may be needed to help with further evacuation at their or another location.
3. Do not use elevators to exit the building. Some elevators in newer buildings are powered by emergency generators but it is recommended that you do not use an elevator unless absolutely necessary.
4. Persons in wheelchairs will not be able to use the elevator to leave the building. Some buildings have areas of refuge. Call 2-4444 (UBC First Aid) and ask for a crew to help the person leave the building.

During dark conditions and/or when there is minimal staffing:

1. If the outage last more than 5 minutes, evacuate the building as above
2. If you are the only staff member in a large building, call Koerner Circulation (604-822-9692) who may be able to organize help (eg. Campus Security) to evacuate.

C) Decisions to close the branch/unit

Decisions to stay open or to close rest with the Branch/Unit Head or designate, who should contact their AUL for guidance.

Library Facilities (Alicia Munro 604-822-5521 or in her absence Jean-Paul Eidsvik 604-822-5903) should also be contacted for assistance.

Staffing working alone, especially evenings, who cannot reach their head or Alicia Munro should contact Koerner Circulation (604-822-9692) for assistance.

Guidelines:

1. If there is adequate interior light and a crew is working on the problem, and conditions are safe, staff may continue to work in the building.
2. If it is light but indications are that power will not be restored for many hours, a decision should be made to close. Staff may be temporarily reassigned to an unaffected branch nearby or, if appropriate, may be sent home.

3. If light is diminished and it is dark outside, or if conditions appear unsafe, a decision should be made to close immediately and temporarily reassign staff to an unaffected branch nearby or, if appropriate, sent home.
4. Staff must ensure their unit/building is locked and secured before they leave. If necessary call Patrol and wait for them to arrive and help secure the building. Contact Alicia Munro if you have questions about your unit's security system.
5. Place a sign on the door indicating the library is closed due to a Power Outage.

In all cases, report closures to Alicia Munro (604-822-5521) or, if she is unavailable, Koerner Circulation (604-822-2406). It is important to have branch closures reported to a central place. If possible IT will also update the website with closure information.

D) Making your way home

Attend to personal safety and remember that transit services may be affected. Arrange to ride share or take a taxi if need be. If driving, follow the four-way stop procedure and watch for pedestrians at signalized intersections when the signal lights are not functioning.