

Energy or Water Supply Failure on University Campuses Policy

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Document URL	http://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/Energy or Water Supply Failure on University Campuses Policy.pdf
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Description	The document sets out the University's policy on the responsibilities of members of the University in the event of prolonged unscheduled failures of either energy supplies or water supplies to any building or campus of the University. Guidelines are provided on actions which are to be taken in respect of the continuation of teaching, research and other activities of the University.

Related documents

[Emergency Management Plan](#)

[Evacuation Procedures \(Building Fire and Evacuation Plans\)](#)

[\[Policy\]](#) [\[Context\]](#) [\[Failures\]](#) [\[Procedures\]](#)

1. POLICY

In the event of loss of either a supply of energy or water to any campus or building the safety and security of all students, staff and visitors as well as that of the physical assets of the University are of the utmost importance.

If work or study cannot be performed safely and within the requirements of relevant legislation, staff and students must leave the buildings or campuses until it is safe to return to the workplace following the re-establishment of supply.

2. CONTEXT

The University is totally dependent on external supply authorities for energy (electricity) and water to all campuses.

There are limited provisions for backup energy supplies for essential services such as PABX and emergency lights and some generator capacity for some research activities. Computing systems will shut down when the battery powered Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) expires. None of these are designed to allow long-term operation in the event of a loss of supply from the supply authority.

Nathan and Gold Coast campuses have duplicate water supplies while other campuses have only a single source of water supply. In all cases, water for each campus comes from a single reservoir and is subject to total loss if there is an external event including energy failures at Supply Authority (Brisbane Water or Gold Coast Water) Pumping Stations.

3. FAILURES

3.1 Type of Failure

Failures usually fall into either one of two categories: Minor or Major.

Many systems have "Automatic Reset Features" which will try to restart the system automatically.

When a failure occurs, the Automatic Reset will try to re-energise the system within minutes.

If the failure is Minor, the system will come on-line again and stay on-line.

If the failure is Major, the system may come on-line momentarily and then drop out again until a technical officer attends the incident. Substantial repair work may then be required to re-instate supply

3.2 Failure of an on-campus supply

If a supply system on campus fails unexpectedly between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday, staff of Campus Life will respond to the event in order to ascertain the cause and the likely implications. After hours ie. 5pm to 8am Monday to Friday, weekends or public holidays, staff are on call-out rosters so the response will be slower.

Such failures are likely to be localised and usually affect only one or two buildings on a campus. They can be Minor or Major.

3.3 Failure of Supply Authority Network

If a Supply Authority Network failure occurs, the University will have very little influence over the outcome.

Such failures will generally affect one or more campuses in total.

The staff of Campus Life will try to ascertain the duration of any major failure through its contacts with the Supply Authority and communicate this to the University. It is likely however that in the event of a Major energy failure, communication may be difficult or slow because internal systems will have dropped out due to failures.

In the event of any building evacuation alarm being sounded while a power or water failure is in place, staff and students must evacuate the building(s).

3.4 Impact of Failures

The impact of a failure of energy supplies will be felt immediately. Lights will go out and equipment (including air conditioning, ventilation and refrigeration equipment) will stop functioning.

All buildings are equipped with emergency and exit lighting to allow safe evacuation of the building in the event of energy supply failures.

There is the potential for staff and students to be trapped in lifts until such time as they can be manually released. Lift cars have emergency lighting. Campus Life gives priority to having anyone trapped in a lift being released.

Water supply failure will usually be less sudden than an energy supply failure. However, other than a few storage tanks in buildings feeding laboratory systems, there is no general emergency water supply for toilets, drinking or other purposes.

Water outages in laboratories will render emergency equipment such as safety showers and eye washes ineffective. In laboratories where the risk from unavailability of these emergency services is significant, work should cease until water supply is restored.

4. PROCEDURES

Procedures in the event of an energy or water failure are set out below.

In all cases, academic staff who are teaching must take control of their class and ensure that students stay calm and orderly. If the room is to be evacuated, academic staff must ensure safe and orderly evacuation through the usual signed exit doors.

4.1 Energy Failure

In the event of an energy failure, if the lights come on within thirty seconds and stay on, the failure can be deemed to be a Minor failure and work or teaching can continue as normal.

In the event that energy is unavailable for more than several minutes, it is likely that the failure is a Major failure and may take some time to repair. In such circumstances the following must occur:

- 1) Any classes including lectures, seminars and laboratory classes must cease and the rooms vacated in an orderly manner.

Students must be advised that classes will be discontinued until the beginning of the next normally scheduled class period after the power returns.

- 2) All laboratory work should cease immediately and any work in progress made safe.

Remember that fume cupboards are not functioning and that water supplies could fail.

Make sure that all cold rooms, freezers, refrigerators are closed properly and avoid opening them for any unnecessary reason until the energy supply is restored.

Switch off all equipment before leaving the room to avoid the possibility of a dangerous restart when the energy is reconnected.

Secure the room before leaving.

- 3) Senior staff in libraries will decide whether the library should be vacated.
- 4) Staff in office areas with openable windows may be able to continue to work if it is safe and possible to do so with natural lighting. Under no circumstances are candles to be used to provide any form of lighting.
- 5) If the energy failure persists for more than an hour and advice from Campus Life indicates that the outage will last longer than a reasonable period, or for an unknown period, then the Head of Campus may give an instruction for staff to go home until the next day.
- 6) If the energy outage is likely to persist for several days, the University will place announcements on local radio stations and on the University website and social media to advise about returning to work or resuming classes.
- 7) The University has a certain number of emergency generators which have been assigned on a priority basis to maintain energy to designated areas (such as animal facilities, the anatomy facility). Campus Life staff will be responsible for initiating generator supply in accordance with the specified priorities.

4.2 Water Supply Failure

If the water supply fails for any reason, staff of Campus Life will ascertain the likelihood of the extent of failure.

If warranted, the Head of Campus on advice from Campus Life will issue an instruction that the affected building or campus must be closed until the water supply is reinstated.

If the water outage is likely to persist for several days, the University will place announcements on local radio stations and on the University website and social media to advise about returning to work or resuming classes.