# Power OutagesUniversity of Washington Environmental Health & Safety logo.

*The University provides the following instructions to help UW personnel, students and visitors prepare for responding to an emergency on the Seattle campus. University units and departments can modify these instructions for their specific location(s) and add them to their Fire Safety and Evacuation Plans.*

## When the power goes out

Visit www.washington.edu/safety/alert, tune to KOMO 1000 AM, or call UW 206-547-INFO to get information about the situation. If conditions seem dangerous, evacuate the area and assist others to evacuate as needed. Do not re-enter a building until authorities have determined it safe to do so.

## Emergency Lighting

* Many buildings are equipped with emergency lighting systems that provide minimal light for exiting, not routine work. Evacuate buildings while these systems are still operating.
* Emergency pathway lighting is only designed to last about 90 minutes.
* Some buildings on the Seattle campus may have emergency lighting for up to eight hours but many have no emergency power at all.

## General Procedures for Academic Buildings

* **Assess** the extent of the outage in your area.
* **Remain calm**; provide assistance to others if necessary. Help co-workers in darkened work areas move to safe and lighted locations.
* **Exits** may be indicated by lighted signs if the emergency power is operating.
* **Report** the outage to your facility manager. On the UW Seattle campus, call **206-685-1411.**
* **Open blinds** for additional light.
* **Open windows** for improved ventilation, if needed.
* If possible, **shut off power** to machinery and equipment that could restart while unattended.
* **Don’t use candles,** lanterns, charcoal, grills, or anything that uses fuel inside a building.
* Don’t bring **emergency generators** indoors or near building doors or windows.
* If you are **trapped in an elevator on the Seattle campus,** use the emergency call panel inside the elevator to call for help. Use your cellphone to call UW Facilities at 206-685-0200 if the emergency call panel is not working.
* **Evacuate** if the power is anticipated to be out for an extended period of time and work conditions are not safe or exit pathways are not lighted.

## Procedures for Laboratories, Shops, and Locations with potentially hazardous materials or conditions

* **Shut down** **equipment** and preserve important work.
* Promptly **evacuate** areas with hazardous materials and equipment.
* Close sashes on **fume hoods** and **biological safety cabinets**.
* If possible, cap any **open containers** of hazardous materials.
* **Secure** any hazardous materials in transport.
* **Keep refrigerators and freezers closed** throughout the outage. If necessary, implement backup procedures such as obtaining dry ice for refrigerators.
* **When power is restored, assess** your area for potentially hazardous situations, such as devices left “on.” Also do this if power is restored when the facility would normally not be occupied.
* **Review the UW** **Laboratory Safety Manual,** **Section 9,** for additional information.

## Procedures for ON-Campus Residential Buildings

Follow the procedures above and following instructions from UW Housing & Food Services (HFS).

## Responses to Types of Power outages

The classification of unplanned power outages depends on several factors (expected duration of outage, time of day, time of year, etc.). In general, unplanned power outages can be broken down in terms of severity and probable emergency actions, as follows:

* Minor impacts to individual rooms or small buildings, for periods usually not exceeding 1 day
  + Emergency actions typically include the temporary relocation of directly affected personnel (as necessary) until repairs can be made by facilities management.
* Impacts to a small number of buildings for periods exceeding 1 day, or where the outage impairs life safety or heating system needs
  + Assuming the needs of displaced or impacted personnel can be met on campus, emergency actions typically include the temporary relocation of students in affected buildings to other on-campus facilities, and employees being given alternative work assignments or sent home until repairs can be made by facilities management.
* Multi-day or multi-building impacts, where the outage impairs life safety or heating system needs
  + Assuming the needs of displaced or impacted personnel cannot be met on campus, emergency actions typically include the temporary relocation of students in affected buildings to other off-campus facilities, and employees being given alternative work assignments or sent home until repairs can be made by facilities management or the utility supply vendor.