

POLICY ON EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AS RELATED TO RESEARCH
LABORATORIES AND OTHER SPECIAL FACILITIES

ORIGINATOR: Faculty Senate Council for Research

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POLICY #97-1

I. PURPOSE:

This document outlines URI emergency policy and procedures regarding planned and unplanned utility outages, particularly as they affect critical facilities and equipment related to research. A variety of events, both expected and unexpected, may lead to the loss of utilities in URI buildings. In addition, storms, plumbing failures, fires, etc. may require emergency action in order to minimize damage to University buildings, equipment and materials within the buildings. For many emergency responses, there is a need to notify and communicate with persons who are familiar with or responsible for facilities so as to prevent and/or minimize losses.

II. APPLICABLE TO:

All employees

III. RESPONSIBILITY:

The Department of Facilities and Operations has the primary and official role in the implementation of substantial portions of this policy. However, other departments and individuals with key responsibilities include: Police Department, Department of Safety and Risk Management, and Principal Investigators (PIs). Department Chairs and Building Managers or Building Contacts may also be asked to provide assistance in utility outages and emergencies.

IV. POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

A. Role and Responsibilities of Police and Security

The initial contact point for all emergencies, including medical emergencies, hazardous material or chemical spills, and utility outages, shall be URI Police and Security. The primary telephone numbers for reporting emergencies are: x2121 from campus or 874-2121 from non-campus telephones. Because 911 operators cannot determine the location of callers more specifically than just the Kingston Campus, the emergency 911 number should not be used to report campus emergencies.

1. Medical emergencies: When notified of a medical emergency or of a request for medical assistance, URI Police and Security are

responsible for notifying appropriate emergency response personnel and for assisting them in responding to the emergency.

2. Hazardous material or chemical spills: When notified of any spill or release of material that may represent a risk to personnel, URI Police and Security are responsible for notifying the URI Office of Safety and Risk Management. URI Safety and Risk Management shall respond and assist in chemical or hazardous material spills as necessary at any time.
3. Utility Outages: When notified of any utility outages, URI Police and Security are responsible for notifying Facilities and Operations. They are also responsible for passing any subsequent information that might be reported to them about the outage to Facilities and Operations.
4. Alarm Systems: URI Police and Security monitors a number of alarms on campus. Where those alarms are related to the physical facilities, Police and Security will notify Facilities and Operations of the alert. For intrusion alarms, Police and Security will notify directly the responsible persons listed with the response instructions which the Office shall keep on file for each alarm.

B. Role and Responsibilities of Facilities and Operations

The URI Department of Facilities and Operations has a primary and official role particularly in cases of planned and unplanned utility outages. Utilities include electric power, water, building heat, and building air conditioning. Among other duties, it shall be the responsibility of Facility and Operations, to notify persons responsible for buildings, laboratories, and other facilities of utility outages or other problems that could lead to loss or damage to materials, equipment, living plants or animals, or loss of an unrepeatable experiment. This notification is to permit the responsible person, with the assistance of URI Facilities and Operations as appropriate, to take action to prevent or minimize damage and losses.

To carry out its role, Facilities and Operations shall maintain a "Critical Facilities and Call-up List" or similar data. Among other items, the data shall include information about laboratories or other specialized facilities where a utility, outage would result in: 1) loss of animal or plant life; 2) damaged equipment; or, 3) irreplaceable loss of data. Included in this information shall be persons to contact in case of utility outage or other emergency. By appropriate systematic means, Facilities and Operations shall solicit information from persons responsible for laboratories and special facilities for inclusion in the list.

Facilities and Operations shall also maintain a list of building contacts, people who can pass important safety or maintenance information to users of particular buildings.

1. Planned utility outages: Some utility outages are known in well in advance such as when the utility must be shut off in order to conduct

maintenance or make repairs. In cases of planned utility outages and when there is sufficient time to notify persons during normal working hours, advance notification will be made through building contacts, for example through building managers. Building contacts shall take necessary steps to notify persons in the building of the planned outage. Facilities and Operations shall also endeavor to notify those affected of planned utility outages by other available means, for example via voice mail or e-mail posting.

2. Unplanned or emergency outages: It is impossible for the University to prevent all utility outages. Further, it is difficult to even be aware of some short-term outages such as power fluctuations. In cases of unplanned or emergency utility outages, Facilities and Operations, referencing information in its "Critical Facility & Experiment Call-up List," shall begin notifying those affected only if the outage has already lasted one hour and is expected to last at least three more hours. Every effort will be made to notify all responsible persons identified on the list within four hours of the onset of the outage. Building contacts may be notified and asked to help pass information along during regular working hours, but will not be contacted after regular working hours.
 3. Special arrangements for long utility outages: Because of resource limitations, Facilities and Operations cannot provide special assistance during utility outages that last or are expected to last four hours or less. Should planned or unplanned utility outages last or be expected to last longer than four hours, Facilities and Operations will make every reasonable effort to assist responsible persons in making special arrangements such as emergency generator power or moving materials to other locations, etc. However, it must be recognized that the University has limited resources (e.g., a limited number of generators) to respond to emergency outages. During extensive outages, it may not be possible to provide or respond to all critical facilities.
 4. Information updates regarding utility outages: To allow the responsible persons to keep abreast of developments, Facilities and Operations shall post information updates on an answering machine whose number shall have been provided to persons notified via the Critical Facilities & Experiment List. This is to help responsible persons make decisions on the need to take action, especially if the need for their action is dependent upon the length of time the utility is out. URI Police and Security usually will not have information on the status of a utility outage or information as to the probable time for restoration of utilities. They should not be called for such information.
- C. Role and Responsibilities of Principal Investigators and Others in Charge of Laboratories or Other Special Facilities

Principal investigators or those in charge of laboratories or other special facilities which could qualify for inclusion on the Critical Facilities & Experiment Call-Up List are responsible for notifying and providing

accurate information to Facilities and Operations for the list; for posting pertinent emergency information on the door or other appropriate place of a laboratory or special facility; and for making their own arrangements to prevent loss or damage, especially during short term (4 hours or less) utility outages.

1. Inclusion on the Critical Facilities List: If utility outages of four or more hours can be expected to cause damage or losses as described above, the investigator or person responsible for a special facility shall provide the necessary information to Facilities and Operations. The information should be submitted to the Assistant Director of Facilities and Operations for Maintenance and Repair in formats or on forms specified by the Director or Assistant Director. The investigator or person responsible for a special facility shall inform Facilities and Operations of any changes to this information as necessary.

If a facility no longer needs to be on the Critical Facility List, the investigator or responsible person shall notify Facilities and Operations to have the laboratory or facility removed from the list. This is to prevent unnecessary notifications that slow response and prevent unwanted after-hour disturbances to investigators and responsible persons.

2. Door Postings: Persons responsible for laboratories and other special facilities, including those registered with Facilities and Operations on the Critical Facilities and Call-up List, shall keep an up-to-date posting of critical information on the door or other obvious place of each laboratory or special facility. The posting shall include names and phone numbers of persons who should be contacted in an emergency, of persons who are familiar with the facility, and shall give notice of any special hazards related to the facility. The posting shall be updated as often as necessary to reflect any changes in personnel or other circumstances associated with the facility or at least once per year. Suggested or required formats for these postings shall be available through the Offices of Safety and Risk Management and from Facilities and Operations and shall be also be printed in the University Telephone Book.
3. Special arrangements to protect against losses or damage: Since it is not feasible for the University to prevent short-term utility outages or to provide all the equipment or facilities necessary to prevent loss or damage, it is the responsibility of the investigator or person responsible for a facility to make their own special arrangements to prevent loss during utility outages lasting four hours or less.

If there are other losses of university-supplied services, not specifically covered in this policy, that will lead to damage of materials or to an experiment, it is the responsibility of the investigator or responsible person to make arrangements to prevent the loss or damage.

D. Changes to This Policy

Requests or suggestions for changes to this policy should be forwarded in writing to the Offices of the Faculty Senate, the Vice President for Business, and/or the Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research and Outreach.