Power Outage Procedures

1) At all times, take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of all students, teachers and staff.

2) Print out these instructions and the Rocky Mountain Power Account Numbers information keep them readily available for power outages and emergencies.

3) Note the time of day of the power outage.

4) Wait 10 to 5 minutes before calling anyone. During this time, complete Step 5.

5) There are three possible circumstances related to power outages which must be investigated: A) Power is out to the school and the surrounding neighborhood (96% of the time). B) Sections of the school are without power (3%). C) Power is out in the school building only (<1%).

The school’s Head Custodian should first check the emergency generator. It should be running 30 seconds after the power outage began and the emergency lighting in the corridors should be on. If the generator is running it is usually an indication that the power is off to the school and surrounding neighborhood but this should be verified anyway by checking nearby homes or businesses for evidence of no power. Once the Custodian has verified that the outage has affected the surrounding area, proceed to Step 6 and report that power is out to the building.

If power is out in some sections of the school but not all, it is likely that one or two legs of the three phase power supplied to the building are out. Typically the emergency generator will not be running but some lights or items plugged into wall outlets will be operating normally. This condition, known as a “phase loss”, can have detrimental effects on the school’s major mechanical and electrical equipment. It should be reported immediately to Rocky Mountain Power and the Custodian should turn off all large motors, pumps, fans, etc. using the appropriate circuit breaker or disconnect switch. Note battery powered emergency lights function only when power to their individual circuit is out so they are not a good indicator of the outage cause. Look for other indicators of the cause instead.

If power appears to be out to the school only, i.e., surrounding homes or business have power, the Custodian should conduct a routine check of the main electrical breaker. If the breaker has tripped, proceed to the next step and report that power is out in the building. The Custodian should not reset the main breaker. In the event the Custodian cannot determine that the main breaker has tripped, he or she should get training immediately as this is the custodian’s responsibility. Likewise, the Night Custodian and others responsible for the building should know how to make this determination. The Shops do not have enough resources available to check the main breakers at every school in the event of power problems. If the main breaker is OK, then the power is likely out to the building and the possibility the surrounding neighborhood. If the breaker has tripped, call the Facility Services office at 886-8929 for instructions.
6) Use the designated power failure phone line in the school’s main office to call the Facility Services office at 886-8929 and report the following: A) time of the outage, B) the cause of the problem (power is out to the building, phase loss or the power is out in the building), and C) the status of the generator and fuel level. Do not call the Shops to report this information. If the power is out in the building or if your generator isn’t working, the Facilities office will issue an emergency Work Order and send out the District electricians. If you need help with the phones, call Tech Services at 886-8935.

7) To report a power outage or phase loss, call Rocky Mountain Power at the Outage Hotline (877) 548-3768 or (888) 221-7070. Merely follow the recorded directions. You will need the school’s main electrical account number which can be found on the separate Rocky Mountain Power Account Numbers document. You may also call this same phone number periodically to enquire about the estimated duration of a power outage in your area. Note the Rocky Mountain Power information center is out of state. This is the same number that the Facility Services office calls for information. We cannot give you any better information than from this source so it’s far more expedient if you call Rocky Mountain Power directly rather than calling our office for an update. Do not call Rocky Mountain Power if the power is out in the building because they cannot help you.

8) The Custodian should check the school grounds for possible downed power lines. Do not allow anyone to approach downed lines. Notify Rocky Mountain Power and take action immediately to protect others from coming near them.

9) If the outage continues for more than one hour, notify the Superintendent’s even though the Facilities office will generally do this too. The decision to continue to hold school will depend upon the time of day the outage occurred, the anticipated duration of the outage and the weather. See Step 12.

10) The Custodian should monitor the generator fuel level periodically during the outage. If the fuel level drops to 1/4 full the custodian should call the Shops and order more fuel immediately. After power has been restored, check the fuel level and order more if it is below 3/4 full - do not wait until the next power outage to top up the fuel supply.

11) After the power has been restored, the Custodian should check the building’s mechanical systems to make sure the fans, pumps, etc. automatically returned to normal operation. Also, if a phase loss has occurred and the Custodian turned off fans and motors, he or she should make sure they are turned back on after the power is restored.

12) IMPORTANT - Call the Facility Services office at 886-8929 ext 154 or ext 160 and report the time when the power is restored. If the Facilities office does not hear from you, we will assume the power is still off and may take additional action steps. It is your responsibility to follow through and let us know when your school is back to normal.