

City of Red Bluff
Administrative Policies & Procedures – Personnel Manual

Subject: Operational Shut-down due to Emergency Conditions / Power Outages		Number: 22-53
		Effective Date: 10/17/2023
Departments Affected: All		Supersedes (Number/Date):
Authority: Section 2.82-A. Red Bluff City Code	File References:	
	Approved: Approved by City Council on: 10/17/2023	

Overview: This rule provides guidance to employees in the event of a power failure, outage, disruption, or interruption, either planned or unplanned. When emergency situations result in a power failure, this rule will be superseded by the City disaster plan as integrated by the Office of Emergency Services. The purpose of this policy is also to establish and outline the City of Red Bluff's policy towards the closure of city operations due to emergency conditions as declared by the City Manager.

Applicable to: All employees

Guidelines: Whether it is caused by a natural disaster, man-made error, unforeseen events, or planned maintenance, there may be times in the course of conducting City business when power may be disrupted. If a Department Head or Administration receives an advanced warning of a planned power outage, that information should be communicated to other affected departments. If the outage is unplanned, a call should be made to the electric utility to determine if there is an estimated length of the outage. Safety will be the priority consideration during any power outage.

HVAC Systems

In a power outage, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems will shut down. OSHA has determined that room temperature and humidity are a matter of comfort and there is no standard. However, should inside temperatures exceed 80°, employees should follow procedures according to the City Heat Illness Prevention Program. The Department Head may also consider the establishment of a cooling area. If the Department Head determines the temperature has reached a point where it is harmful for extended exposure, or where the air quality reaches an unhealthy state due to lack of circulation, employees may be released from the workplace.

Security Systems

In a power outage, the inability to operate lights, automatic door locks, security alarms, and surveillance cameras may limit employee safety and security. Department Heads should establish alternate plans for when these systems are inoperable.

Generators

Due to the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning and use of flammable

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materials, only those trained in the use of generators should be responsible for initiating their use.

Sanitation Facilities and Potable Water

Under OSHA guidelines, the City of Red Bluff must provide adequate and readily accessible sanitation facilities and potable water. Should a power outage interfere with an employee's accessibility to a toilet and handwashing, the employer must relocate work or ensure that employees have immediately available transportation to readily accessible sanitation facilities.

Cooling Rooms

During a power outage, it is possible that City staff may be working without the comfort of air conditioning. For those facilities without standby generators, power outages will require designating a cooling room for breaks as needed to prevent heat-related illnesses.

Cooling rooms should be located near the employees who will utilize them. Cooling rooms should be large enough to accommodate 25% of employees at one time, with the expectation that breaks and lunch periods will be staggered.

When selecting a room for this purpose, Department Heads or their designee(s) should also consider: 1) a smaller room will require less cooling and power; and 2) location of generators and air conditioning unit vents.

Evacuation Plan

Departments should ensure employees (or specifically assigned employees) are equipped with working flashlights. An evacuation plan should be pre-arranged for interior spaces that will become dark should the power go out. Employees should receive instructions as to the appropriate gathering area where they will receive further instruction.

To mitigate risk while walking through a darkened workplace, employees should walk slowly and cautiously. Walkways should be clear of debris at all times.

Internal plans should be established for accommodating employees and customers who have limited mobility to ensure they will be able to safely exit the building.

Operational Shutdown Due to Emergency Conditions or Extended Power Outage

It is the policy of the City of Red Bluff to maintain a safe work place of employment for all city employees. City management shall make all reasonable provisions necessary for the safety of employees. In periods of emergency, such as, but not limited to extended power outages or extreme weather conditions, the City Manager has the authority to close down all non-emergency or public safety operations of the City. This provides an opportunity for employees to proceed to a place of security prior to the unsafe conditions restricting the flow of traffic or endangering the employee in the conduct of normal City business.

Emergency Conditions for operational shutdown that may be considered but are not limited to:

- Extreme Heat.

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- Wildfires.
- Earthquakes.
- Volcanic Eruptions.
- Extreme storms, including snow, flooding, etc.
- Extended power outages resulting in unsafe working conditions.
- Health emergencies as declared by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

Each Department Head is responsible for coordinating the shutdown of non-emergency or public safety operations with the employees involved within the department/division. This should be done in compliance with the City of Red Bluff Personnel Policies Manual or Memorandum of Understanding, whichever may be applicable. Time lost to the employee during this emergency can be compensated by one or a combination of the following:

1. At the request of the employee, accrued employee benefits, like vacation, administrative leave, or ATO/CTO, may be used; or
2. The employee can choose to be sent home on paid status which means being available by phone and remaining fit for duty to return to work as quickly as feasible upon the end of emergency conditions or restoration of power. The employee can also perform work duties remotely as requested by their supervisor.
3. The employee may arrange a flexible work schedule to make up the time lost during the shutdown period. Under this method, the employee must make up the lost time within 14 days from the day of the shutdown.