



Power Outage

Property owners – residential flats
and high-rise buildings





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Introduction

The potential planned rolling blackouts this winter could have a range of impacts, including:

- Immediate impact on residents and any commercial tenants.
- Loss of lighting, pumped water supplies, heating and cooking facilities.
- Increased safety risks to residents and visitors.
- Disruption to telephone communications.
- Impact on fire and security protection systems.
- Increased crime.

Pre-planning for such an event will help you increase resilience, maintain safety and minimise disruption.

We've created this guide to help your pre-planning assessment, emergency response discussions and training.





General considerations

- Check published information about expected rolling blackouts in your area.
- Communicate with residents and commercial tenants.
- Review risks associated with slips, trips and falls due to reduced lighting.
- Review, document and communicate any revised emergency/evacuation plans including any specific needs for vulnerable residents and provide relevant training to managers and key individuals.
- Mobile telephone networks may be impacted during power outages although hardwired landlines may function. For key personnel, to increase resilience, consider multi-network provider sims for mobile phones.
- Keep all mobile phones fully charged when mains power is available.
- Use power banks to keep mobile phones charged for longer duration.
- Have a battery powered radio and fresh supply of batteries to obtain ongoing information from local radio stations.
- Review access to and use of basement car parks – consider restricting access during power outage.
- Where guidance is being issued to tenants, consider and respond to accessibility needs for tenants.



Planned preventative maintenance

Review and ensure maintenance is up to date for essential equipment, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Passenger lifts – including emergency lowering facility where applicable with local instructions on who is permitted to undertake these operations.
- Emergency diesel generators – including annual load bank test.
- Emergency Lighting - consider time taken for batteries to fully recharge on power resumption.
- Utilities – electrical installations, boilers, air conditioning plant, water pumps.
- Sprinkler systems including pumps.
- Intruder Alarms and access control.
- Automatic Fire Alarms.





Emergency temporary electrical supply

- Where emergency generators are provided, fuel tanks should be kept topped up.
- Where a generator is not provided, consider hiring a temporary generator and providing a permanent or semi-permanent connection point and hardstanding.
- Risk assessment should be undertaken for temporary generators or additional fuel brought on site to ensure this is undertaken safely.

Building equipment and services

- Passenger Lifts – stop use in advance of planned power cut.
- Ensure safe shut-down and restart sequences for any central heating boilers are documented and followed, by trained employees.





Fire and Security Equipment

- **Fire and Intruder alarms** – check the intended duration of supply with your service provider – this will be impacted by the age of the battery and may mean they need to be replaced:
 - Intruder alarms should provide 12 hours battery life.
 - Fire alarms should provide 24 hours battery life.
- Where offsite signalling is provided to intruder or fire alarms, contact your service provider to determine if this will still function, and for what duration, as these will vary considerably.
- **Access Control** – consider security implications as these may ‘fail open’ leaving areas unsecured enabling unauthorised access.
- Review the impact on other mains powered security related devices such as external lighting and CCTV. Consider provision of on-site security guard presence during prolonged power outage.
- **Sprinkler system pumps** – where diesel back up pumps are provided, ensure that these are in working order with functioning battery start facility and full fuel tanks.
 - Where the sprinkler installations only have electric pumps, these will not operate during power outages, so you should review the additional measures detailed on the sprinkler test card.
 - If possible, increase reserve stocks of diesel and update your fire risk assessments beforehand to ensure these are stored safely.

Advice to residents

- Due to the risk of fire, from knocking over or placing near combustibles, candles should not be used. Battery powered lanterns and torches with a supply of fresh batteries are a safer option.
- Switch off and disconnect electrical equipment from sockets to protect against power surge on resumption of electricity supply.
- Leave at least one light switched on to show when power has been restored.
- Avoid opening fridges and freezers to maintain lower temperatures.
- Where water supplies rely on pumps, these will not work, so pre-plan and fill bottles for drinking. Hot drinks in flasks can be prepared in advance.
- Central heating will be affected as it relies on electrical power for fans or pumps.
- Fixed mains gas fires may still operate, but should always be used with caution and kept clear of combustibles, especially if used to assist drying clothes.





Advice to residents

- The duration of power outages should be limited to a few hours so keeping heat in by closing doors and windows will assist.
- Ensure you have additional clothing and blankets available to keep warm.
- Use of temporary portable heating, such as LPG fuelled, should be avoided.
- BBQ's and camping stoves should not be used inside or on balconies, due to the fire risk they pose and the release of deadly carbon monoxide.
- Before using solid fuel fires, ensure chimneys are cleaned by an approved chimney sweep.
 - Make sure you use a fireguard to protect against flying sparks and hot embers.
 - Remove embers from the building and place in a metal lidded container.
 - Keep combustibles clear of solid fuel fires.
- Battery powered Carbon Monoxide detectors should be installed in rooms where combustion heaters, or solid fuel fires or wood burners are used.



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