

Incident Response Guide: Utility Failure

Mission

To safely manage patient care through effective and efficient hospital operations during the loss of a major utility within the hospital.

Directions

Read this entire response guide and review the Hospital Incident Management Team Activation chart. Use this response guide as a checklist to ensure all tasks are addressed and completed.

Objectives

- Identify extent of outage and consider evacuation
- Maintain patient care capabilities
- Minimize impact on hospital operations and clinical services
- Communicate the situation status to patients, staff, and the public

Immediate Response (0 – 2 hours)

Section	Officer	Time	Action	Initials
Command	Incident Commander		Activate the hospital Emergency Operations Plan, Utility Failure Plan, the Hospital Command Center and appropriate Hospital Incident Management Team positions.	
			Establish operational periods, objectives, and regular briefing schedule. Consider using the Incident Action Plan Quick Start for initial documentation of the incident.	
			Determine the need for shelter-in-place or evacuation and activate appropriate incident response plans.	
			Consider limiting nonessential services.	
			Notify the hospital Chief Executive Officer, Board of Directors, and other appropriate internal and external officials of situation status.	
	Public Information Officer		Activate the Risk Communication Plan and media staging area.	
			Prepare a media release to inform the community about the utility outage.	
			Maintain communication with patients, staff, and families regarding the current situation and what is being done to address it.	
			Conduct a hospital census and identify possible discharges, transfers and surgery or procedure cancellations.	
			Update internet, intranet, and social media to disseminate information about hospital status and alteration in services to patients, staff, families, and stakeholders.	
			Monitor media outlets for updates on the incident and possible impacts on the hospital. Communicate information via regular briefings to Section Chiefs and the Incident Commander.	

	Liaison Officer		Notify community partners in accordance with local policies and procedures (e.g., consider local Emergency Operations Center, other area hospitals, local emergency medical services, and healthcare coalition coordinator), to determine incident details, community status, and establish contacts for requesting supplies, equipment, or personnel not available in the hospital.	
			Communicate with other hospitals to determine situation status, ability to accept patients if transfer, hospital abandonment, or evacuation is ordered.	
	Safety Officer		Complete the HICS 215A to assign, direct, and ensure safety actions are adhered to and completed.	

Immediate Response (0 – 2 hours)

Section	Branch/Unit	Time	Action	Initials
Operations	Section Chief		Implement the Evacuation, Shelter-in-Place, and Hospital Abandonment Plan as needed and in cooperation with the Incident Commander.	
	Medical Care Branch Director		Request diversion if needed.	
			Identify evacuation priorities and transfer requirements.	
			Implement downtime documentation procedures for patient care and incident management documentation as required.	
			Conduct a hospital census and determine discharges, transfers, and surgery or procedure cancellations.	
			Assess patients for risk and prioritize care and resources, as appropriate.	
	Infrastructure Branch Director		Implement emergency support procedures to sustain critical services (i.e., power, water, medical gasses, communications) until utility restoration can be accomplished.	
			Activate damage assessment teams to determine the impact and severity of utility outage.	
	Security Branch Director		Initiate emergency procedures to support hospital and campus security in response to a utility outage.	

Planning	Section Chief		Establish operational periods, incident objectives, and the Incident Action Plan in collaboration with the Incident Commander.	
	Resources Unit Leader		Prepare for personnel and equipment tracking.	
	Situation Unit Leader		Monitor and document all actions and activities.	
			Prepare for patient tracking including patient transfers.	
Logistics	Section Chief		Refer to the Job Action Sheet for appropriate tasks.	
	Service Branch Director		Assess the impact of the utility outage on communications and information technology systems.	
			Initiate backup documentation systems if electronic systems are not functioning.	
	Support Branch Director		Respond to requests for supplies and equipment; distribute appropriate equipment throughout the hospital (e.g., portable lights, flashlights, blankets).	
Finance/ Administration	Section Chief		Activate vendor Memoranda of Understanding.	
			Track all costs and expenditures of response, and estimate lost revenues due to canceled procedures, surgeries, and other services.	

Intermediate Response (2 – 12 hours)

Section	Officer	Time	Action	Initials
Command	Incident Commander		Obtain assessment of staffing, equipment, and supply needs and the overall impact from the ongoing utility outage on patient care, remaining staff, and the hospital.	
			Activate Medical-Technical Specialists if needed (e.g., Risk Management, Legal).	
	Public Information Officer		Continue media briefings and updates.	
			Continue briefings and situation updates with patients, staff, and families.	
			Update internet, intranet, and social media to disseminate information about hospital status and alteration in services to patients, staff, families, and stakeholders.	

	Liaison Officer		Continue to update local emergency management and the Emergency Operations Center of situation status and critical issues, and to request assistance as needed.	
			Continue communications with area hospitals and facilitate patient transfers.	
	Safety Officer		Conduct ongoing analysis of exiting response actions for safety issues, implement corrective actions, and update the HICS 215A.	

Intermediate Response (2 – 12 hours)				
Section	Branch/Unit	Time	Action	Initials
Operations	Section Chief		Refer to the Job Action Sheet for appropriate tasks.	
	Medical Care Branch Director		Continue the evaluation of patients and patient care; reevaluate the need to curtail or cancel nonessential services.	
			Reevaluate staffing needed to maintain essential services and to provide patient care.	
			Evaluate staff working in alternate roles and all supplemental staff.	
			Reevaluate the need to continue ambulance diversion.	
	Infrastructure Branch Director		Continue to assess extent of damage or outage; if possible, provide the Incident Commander and Section Chiefs with projected length of the service interruption.	
			Initiate repairs as required.	
	Security Branch Director		Continue to provide hospital security; develop plans to alter security services if phone or power is interrupted.	
Planning	Section Chief		Prepare the Incident Action Plan for the next operational period; engage all sections to provide updates on staffing and alterations in strategies and tactics.	
	Resources Unit Leader		Continue staff and equipment tracking.	
	Situation Unit Leader		Continue patient and bed tracking.	

	Documentation Unit Leader		Ensure complete documentation of all postponed and canceled appointments and procedures.	
Logistics	Section Chief		Refer to the Job Action Sheet for appropriate tasks.	
	Support Branch Director		Continue to provide staff for essential operations.	
			Monitor, report, follow up on, and document patient or staff injuries.	
Finance/ Administration	Section Chief		Refer to the Job Action Sheet for appropriate tasks.	
	Time Unit Leader		Track hours associated with the emergency response.	
	Procurement Unit Leader		Facilitate contracting for resources and services.	
	Cost Unit Leader		Track costs, staff hours, expenditures, and lost revenue.	

Extended Response (greater than 12 hours)

Section	Officer	Time	Action	Initials
Command	Incident Commander		Continue to monitor operations, consider the length of onsite operations, and determine the need for expanded postponement of procedures.	
			With the Public Information Officer, prepare to speak with patients, staff, visitors, media, and stakeholders.	
			Update the hospital Chief Executive Officer, Board of Directors, and other appropriate internal and external officials of situation status.	
	Public Information Officer		Continue to hold regularly scheduled media briefings in conjunction with the Joint Information Center.	
			Address social media issues as warranted; use social media for messaging as situation dictates.	
	Safety Officer		Update the HICS Form 215A for extended operations. Ensure an updated safety plan is incorporated into the Incident Action Plan.	

Extended Response (greater than 12 hours)

Section	Branch/Unit	Time	Action	Initials
Operations	Section Chief		Continue the evaluation of patients and the ability to provide patient care, and begin to plan for the restoration of utilities.	
			Ensure that all documentation, including damage assessments, repair costs, and tracking materials, are submitted to the Planning Section.	
	Medical Care Branch Director		Continue the evaluation of patients and patient care, and begin to plan for restoration of normal staffing and services.	
	Infrastructure Branch Director		Continue to provide regular updates to Section Chiefs on repairs, restoration of services, or continued service interruptions.	
Planning	Section Chief		Ensure that updated information and intelligence is incorporated into the Incident Action Plan. Ensure the Demobilization Plan is being readied.	
	Resources Unit Leader		Continue equipment and personnel tracking, including resources transferred to other hospitals.	
	Situation Unit Leader		Continue patient and bed tracking, including resources transferred to other hospitals.	
	Documentation Unit Leader		Ensure appropriate documentation of ongoing activities.	
			Collect and collate documentation of actions, decisions, and activities.	
Demobilization Unit Leader		Prepare for demobilization and system recovery.		
Finance/ Administration	Section Chief		Continue to record ongoing and projected costs from postponements and modifications in operations.	

Demobilization/System Recovery

Section	Officer	Time	Action	Initials
Command	Incident Commander		Determine hospital status and declare termination of the incident.	
			Approve the Demobilization Plan.	
			Oversee the hospital's return to normal operations.	

			Assess if criteria for partial or complete reopening of hospital are met, and order reopening and repatriation of patients.	
			With the Public Information Officer prepare to speak with the media.	
	Public Information Officer		Conduct a final media briefing to provide incident resolution; work with the Joint Information Center.	
	Liaison Officer		Maintain contact with the local Emergency Operations Center, other area hospitals, local emergency medical services, and regional medical health coordinator to relay status and critical needs to receive incident and community updates.	
			Continue monitoring of the utility failure impact to hospital and home care services; coordinate information with the Operations Section.	
	Safety Officer		Ensure entry and exit points are open and functioning.	
			Ensure fire doors and alarms are in working order.	
			Monitor and maintain a safe environment during the return to normal operations.	

Demobilization/System Recovery				
Section	Branch/Unit	Time	Action	Initials
Operations	Section Chief		Oversee the restoration of normal patient care operations.	
	Medical Care Branch Director		Discontinue ambulance diversion, if applicable.	
			Reschedule canceled surgeries, procedures, and outpatient appointments.	
			Repatriate evacuated or transferred patients.	
	Infrastructure Branch Director		Complete a hospital damage report, including the progress of repairs, and estimated timelines for restoration to pre-incident condition.	
			Schedule and oversee a test of the hospital alarm systems.	
	Security Branch Director		Maintain hospital security and traffic control.	

	Business Continuity Branch Director		Oversee the restoration of essential services including internet connectivity and communications. Oversee the entry of information and data into electronic records if necessary.	
			If record keeping included the use of paper based records, ensure all clinical information is entered into electronic medical records.	
	Patient Family Assistance Branch Director		Provide behavioral health support and information about community services for patients and families, if needed.	
Planning	Section Chief		Finalize and distribute the Demobilization Plan.	
			Ensure that the status of all impacted clinical and support operations are relayed to appropriate sections for resolution.	
			Conduct debriefings and a hotwash with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Command Staff and section personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative personnel <input type="checkbox"/> All staff <input type="checkbox"/> All volunteers 	
			Write an After Action Report and Corrective Action and Improvement Plan for submission to the Incident Commander, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Summary of the incident <input type="checkbox"/> Summary of actions taken <input type="checkbox"/> Actions that went well <input type="checkbox"/> Actions that could be improved <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations for future response actions 	
	Documentation Unit Leader		Collect, collate, file, and secure completed documentation of actions, decisions, and activities.	
			Prepare a summary of the status and location of all incident patients, staff, and equipment. After approval by the Incident Commander, distribute it to appropriate external agencies.	
Logistics	Section Chief		Inventory all Hospital Command Center and hospital supplies and replenish as necessary, appropriate, and available.	
	Support Branch Director		Release temporary staff and other personnel to normal positions.	
			Complete documentation and follow up of personnel injuries if needed.	

Finance/ Administration	Section Chief		Compile a final summary of all response and recovery costs and expenditures, and estimated lost revenues. Submit to the Planning Section Chief for inclusion in the After Action Report.	
	Compensation/Claims Unit Leader		Contact insurance carriers to initiate reimbursement and claims procedures.	
			Coordinate with Risk Management for additional insurance and documentation needs, including photographs of damage, etc.	

Documents and Tools

Emergency Operations Plan, including:

- Utility Failure Plan
- Emergency Operations Plan
- Evacuation, Shelter-in-Place and Hospital Abandonment Plan
- Alternate Care Site plan
- Business Continuity Plan
- Memoranda of Understanding with appropriate entities
- Discharge Policy
- Paper charts and electronic medical record downtime procedures
- Patient, staff, and equipment tracking procedures
- Hospital and campus maps, blueprints and floor plans
- Risk Communication Plan
- Interoperable Communications Plan
- Demobilization Plan

Forms, including:

- HICS Incident Action Plan (IAP) Quick Start
- HICS 200 – Incident Action Plan (IAP) Cover Sheet
- HICS 201 – Incident Briefing
- HICS 202 – Incident Objectives
- HICS 203 – Organization Assignment List
- HICS 205A – Communications List
- HICS 214 – Activity Log
- HICS 215A – Incident Action Plan (IAP) Safety Analysis
- HICS 221 – Demobilization Checklist
- HICS 251 – Facility System Status Report
- HICS 254 – Disaster Victim/Patient Tracking
- HICS 255 – Master Patient Evacuation Tracking

Job Action Sheets

Access to paper forms for documentation, data entry, etc.

Access to hospital organization chart

Television/radio/internet to monitor news

Telephone/cell phone/satellite phone/internet/amateur radio/2-way radio for communication

Hospital Incident Management Team Activation: Utility Failure

Position	Immediate	Intermediate	Extended	Recovery
Incident Commander	X	X	X	X
Public Information Officer	X	X	X	X
Liaison Officer	X	X	X	X
Safety Officer	X	X	X	X
Operations Section Chief				
Medical Care Branch Director	X	X	X	X
Infrastructure Branch Director	X	X	X	X
Security Branch Director	X	X	X	X
Business Continuity Branch Director				X
Patient Family Assistance Branch Dir.				X
Planning Section Chief				
Resources Unit Leader	X	X	X	X
Situation Unit Leader	X	X	X	X
Documentation Unit Leader		X	X	X
Demobilization Unit Leader			X	X
Logistics Section Chief				
Service Branch Director	X	X	X	X
Support Branch Director	X	X	X	X
Finance /Administration Section Chief				
Time Unit Leader		X	X	X
Procurement Unit Leader		X	X	X
Compensation/Claims Unit Leader				X
Cost Unit Leader		X	X	X