

Systems Failure and Basic Staff Response

St. Joseph's Hospital, Savannah, GA

Computer systems	System down	MIS	Use backup manual/paper systems
Electrical power failure - Emergency generators work	Many lights are out. Only RED plug outlets work	Engineering	Ensure that life support systems are on emergency power (red outlets). Ventilate patients by hand as necessary. Complete cases in progress ASAP. Use flashlights
Electrical power failure - total	Failure of all electrical systems	Engineering and respiratory care services	Utilize flashlights and lanterns, hand ventilate patients, manually regulate IV's, don't start new cases
Elevators out of service	All vertical movement will have to be by stairwells	Engineering and all managers	Review fire and evacuation plans, establish services on first or second floor, use carry teams to move critical patients and equipment to other floor
Elevator stopped between floors	Elevator alarm bell sounding	Engineering and security	Keep verbal contact with personnel still in elevator and let them know help is on its way
Fire alarm system	No fire alarms or sprinklers	Engineering	Institute fire watch, minimize fire hazards, use phone or runners to report fire
Medical gases	Gas alarms, no O ₂ or medical air or nitrous oxide (N ₂ O)	Engineering, material dispensing, and respiratory services	Hand ventilate patients; transfer patients if necessary, use portable O ₂ and other gases, call for additional portable cylinders
Medical vacuum	No vacuum; vacuum systems fail and in alarm	Engineering, respiratory care, and sterile processing	Call central service for portable vacuum, obtain portable vacuum from crash cart, finish cases in progress, don't start new cases
Natural gas; failure or leak	Odor, no flames on burners, etc.	Engineering	Open windows to ventilate, turn off gas equipment, don't use any spark producing devices, electric motors, switches, etc.
Nurse call system	No patient contact	Engineering	Use bedside patient telephone if available; move patients; use bells, detail a rover to check patients
Sewer stoppage	Drains backing up	Engineering	Do not flush toilets, do not use water
Steam failure	No building heat, hot water, laundry, sterilizers inoperative, limited cooking	Engineering	Conserve sterile materials and all linens, provide extra blankets, prepare cold meals
Telephones	No phone service	Engineering and telecommunications	Use overhead paging, pay phones, bypass phones, use runners as needed
Water	Sinks and toilets inoperative	Engineering and sterile processing	Institute fire watch; conserve water; use bottled water for drinking; be sure to turn off water in sinks, use RED bags in toilet
Water non-potable	Tap water unsafe to drink	Engineering, dietary, and all managers	Place "Non-Potable Water - Do Not Drink" signs at all drinking fountains and wash basins
Ventilation	No ventilation; no heating or cooling	Engineering	Open windows (institute fire watch) or obtain blankets if needed, restrict use of odorous/hazardous materials

