**Program Considerations During a Power Failure**

When a power loss occurs, many decisions need to be made as to whether or not to cancel programs, send home children or dependent adult participants, and keep the facility open. The following points are intended to serve as preparation guidelines that can be used to establish a facility specific procedure in the event of a power loss.

- Keep in mind that a phone system, which requires electricity, will not operate during a power failure. If possible, a non-electrical phone should be available so it can be plugged in to make calls and answer incoming calls. Participants’ parents or guardians may be calling to inquire about the cancellation of a program due to power loss. If the facility phone system will not allow a single phone, a cell phone must be available.

- When a power failure occurs, first determine if the outage is a facility specific problem or a general area loss of electrical service. If the loss is a facility problem, contact agency maintenance personnel to determine the length of the power loss. If the loss of power is not facility specific, contact the electrical service provider to determine the approximate outage length. Have the phone number of the electric company available for quick reference. Keep all groups in the building updated with the cause and estimated length of the power loss.

- Once the length of the outage is known, program cancellation decisions need to be addressed. The following factors should be considered:
  - Is the power loss associated with inclement weather that would otherwise cancel the program?
  - Will the facility temperature stay within a comfortable zone?
  - Are the participants adversely affected by a change in temperature?
  - Is adequate lighting available from battery powered or natural sources?
  - Are key areas well lit (exit paths, restrooms, locker rooms, stairways)?
  - How long will the light source be available?
  - Are the heat and smoke alarms still functioning?

- If a children’s program is cancelled due to the power loss, do not send children home without notifying the parents. If the parents are not at home or are unable to be reached, do not send the children home. Make arrangements to transfer the children to another facility that has power, if the losses of heat or related failures make a move necessary. However, post the new location at the entrance to the facility you are leaving to inform parents who come to pick-up their children.

- If the building is to be closed as a result of the power loss, remember to turn off light switches so the lights are not left on when the power is restored.

- Other items needed on-hand in the event of a power failure:
  - Battery operated flashlights
  - Battery operated radio
  - Extra batteries