



FEMA

LESSON LEARNED

Continuity of Operations: Possessing Portable Generators to Ensure Delivery of Critical Services During Incidents

SUMMARY

Higher education institutions should possess a sufficient number of portable generators to ensure continuity of operations and delivery of critical services during power outages and other large-scale events.

DESCRIPTION

Between January 27 and 30, 2009, a major winter storm struck Athens County, Ohio, producing snow accumulation and hazardous driving conditions. Ice build-up caused trees and public utility service lines to fall and hindered water distribution to some parts of the county. The amount of snow necessitated the closure of roads, schools, and businesses throughout the county. Many areas, including the City of Nelsonville and the townships of York, Trimble, and Dover, also experienced severe electrical outages. During this storm, utility companies encountered difficulties in managing power restoration operations. As a result, power restoration operations continued until Sunday, January 31.

Hocking College, in Nelsonville, lost electrical power during this winter storm. The outage caused the campus computer network, building alarm network, and the residence halls' access systems to fail. At one point during the storm, telephone lines also became inoperable. As a result, campus safety police and other staff members had to employ handheld radios and personal cellular telephones to maintain communications. In addition, these staff members resorted to patrolling campus buildings because no other monitoring mechanism was operational.

Hocking College is a 2-year technical college located in Nelsonville, 60 miles southeast of Columbus, Ohio. The college offers over 40 associate degree programs to over 5,000 undergraduate students.

Hocking College lacked a sufficient number of portable generators that could be employed on campus when the storm hit. In an effort to address the essential needs of the student population, maintenance staff members moved the only portable generator available to different campus locations. This impaired the campus staff's ability to ensure continuity of operations and to maintain essential services throughout this event. The after-action report recommends that higher education institutions possess a sufficient number of portable generators that can be used during emergencies.

Higher education institutions should possess a sufficient number of portable generators to ensure continuity of operations and delivery of critical services during power outages and other large-scale events.

CITATION

Athens County Emergency Management Agency. *January 2009 Ice Storm After Action Report*. 10 Feb 2009.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=35284>

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