

PREPARING FOR POWER OUTAGES

Villa Marin shares a major electrical power feeder with the nearby Kaiser hospital, so the chances of a power shutoff are low. But if one were to occur, there are things that independent living residents must be prepared for.

On a power outage, Villa Marin's emergency generator will automatically start up. It will provide electricity to the common areas, including the Health Center, but not to the condos. The condos will go dark. Here are some items to plan for in that event.

Safety. Keep flashlights or battery-powered lights on hand so that you can safely move around your condo in the dark. Do not use candles or other flaming devices. Think of the situation as camping – go to bed when it's too dark to stay up.

Food. Items in your refrigerator should keep for a few days if you don't open the door. You will not be able to cook, so plan to eat canned or other cold foods. The dining room will be open, using disposable serving materials (since the dishwashers won't work).

Communications. TV and the internet will be down, but your cell phone may work if the nearest tower is functioning. Your house phone will work since it is powered over the telephone line, but extension phones you might have won't work. Reception will set up one or more power strips for recharging cell phones, electric razors and the like. Administration's PA system should work so you can be kept up to date on the power situation.

Water and heat. The cold-water system will continue to function. Hot water will not, since it depends on circulating pumps, so expect to wash in cold water. The heat pump for heating and cooling your condo will not work so you may wish to keep your windows closed to conserve heat.

Getting around the building. Half the hall lights will be working, just as on a spare-the-air day. Only the central elevator is connected to the emergency generator – all the others will be down.

Residents who depend on breathing equipment or other health-related electrical devices will be moved to the Health Center.

Villa Marin has several portable generators that will be used as needed for the common areas, but that's no help for condo dwellers.