

DOUBLE TROUBLE

The power is out, the generator didn't start.

18.5 Hours



Presented by:

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Laurie Thompson, Emergency Preparedness and Safety Director

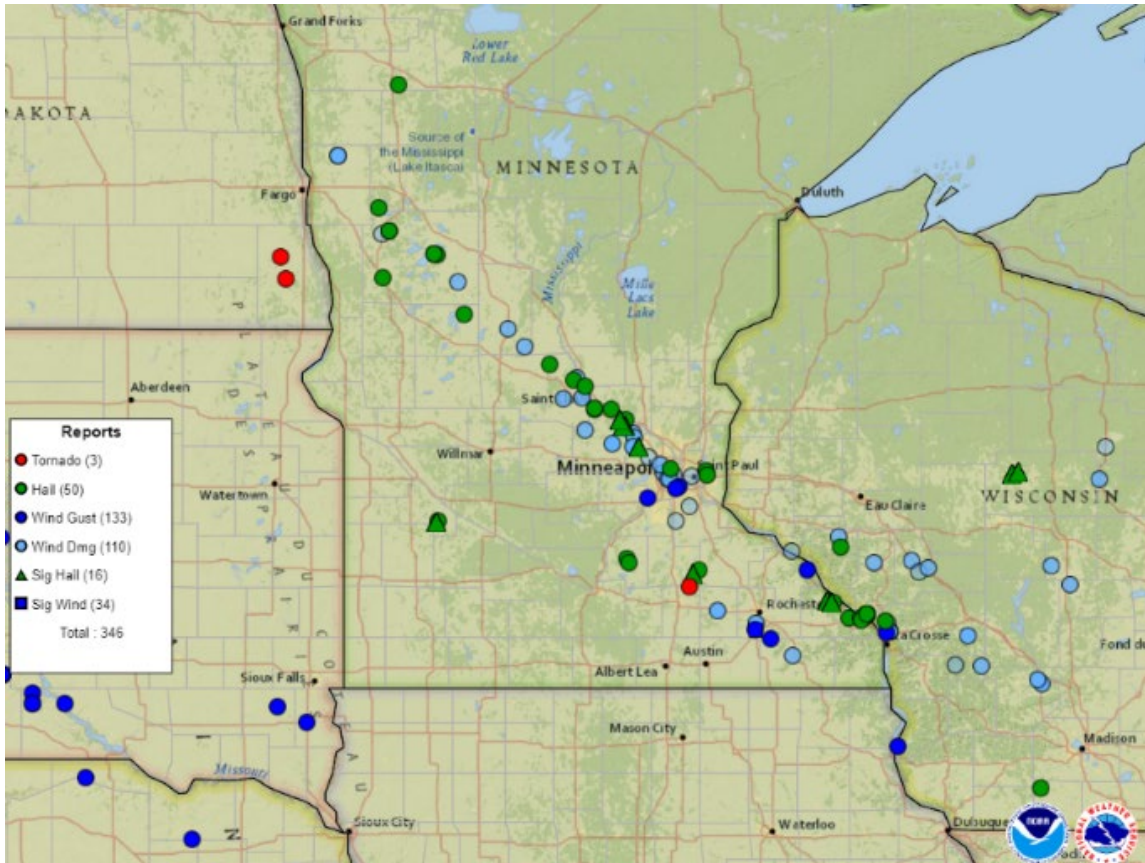


Walker Place in Minneapolis

- 124 units for Assisted Living, Independent Living and Care Suites
- 8 Stories
- Built in 1984
- Generator original - located in basement.



Weather conditions on July 13th and 14th 2024



Multiple rounds of thunderstorms led to widespread wind and hail damage across parts of MN and WI on July 13th and into the morning of July 14th.

An unusually warm and humid air mass resulted in heat index values greater than 100F across portions of MN during the evening of July 13th

Trees were reported down in the vicinity around the building.



Photo: Pioneer Press Trees block street in South Minneapolis



What occurred at Walker Place? Double Trouble

The power went out and the generator didn't start up.

Discovery:

At 2:30 am, the Resident Assistant on duty call the Director of Health Services to report the power outage.

The resident assistant notified Chase around 3:00 PM

The EVS notified the Executive Director at 6:30 AM

EVS support was dispatched and arrived at 7:00 AM to discover that the elevators weren't running. The generator had not kicked on.

Timeline:

- Power outage was reported to Xcel Energy around 3AM
- Elevator vendor arrived at 11:00 A.M. and found wiring issue between elevator and generator.
- An electrician was called to the site, arrived 1:00 PM
 - Discovered that the newly replaced switch gear was incorrectly wired to the elevator.
- The generator was back online around 4:00 PM. One elevator, emergency and egress lighting, heating, but no air conditioning.
- Full power to the building was restored by Xcel at 9:00 PM

Safety Plan:

- Temperatures were monitored hourly. 80+ degrees was the threshold for evacuation. Temps got to 78 degrees at warmest part of the day.
- Plan was to move residents next door to the SNF building in the chapel/community room area if temps climbed above 80. The SNF was operating on full generator power.
- Ice water, snacks, and meals were delivered to the resident apartments.
- All residents were checked on regularly.
- Visitors were not turned away. Some did choose to take the stairs.

Communication Plan:

- Initial communication went out on overhead paging that goes to each apartment. Many residents stated they couldn't understand the message and called down to the front desk. This continued throughout the day.
- Staff continued to update residents as they delivered snacks, beverages, and meals door to door.
- A few residents made their way down the stairs late in the day.



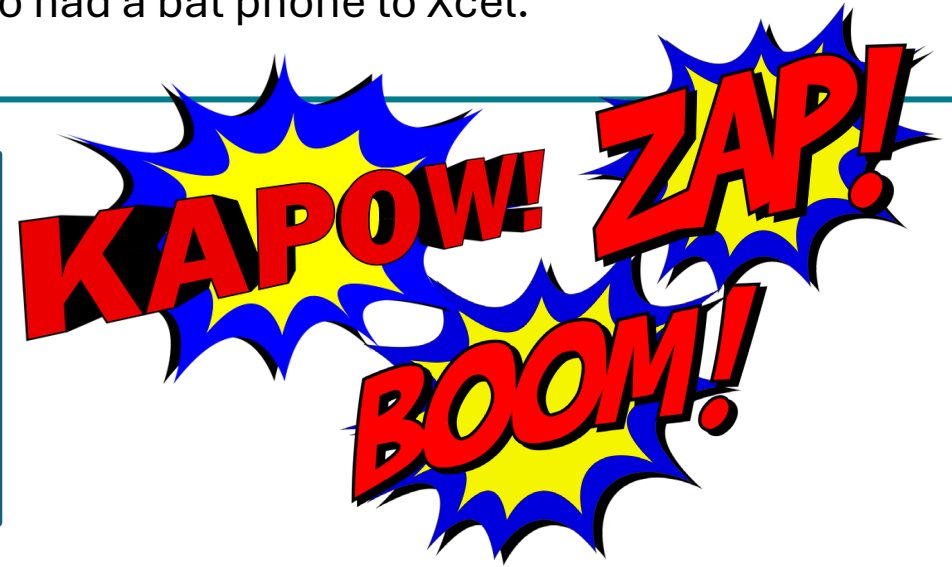
More Discoveries:

Xcel Energy kept closing out our outage tickets. 3 times before power was restored. We had to keep asking them to reopen it.

More Actions:

We called the Coalition around 5:00 PM to see if they knew who had a bat phone to Xcel.

Both Emily and Chris made multiple calls to city and county Emergency Managers in the area. Hennepin County's emergency manager was in contact with Xcel on our behalf. But with the ticket continuing to get closed out, it seemed to appear that all was well for us.



Since you are here at the Practicum today, you already know the value of being a member of the Coalition.

What does Xcel have to say?

A call to Xcel to ask about their policy for priority resulted in being told to go to the Outages and Safety page of their website.

This is copied from their website: [Outages and Safety | Xcel Energy](#)

What areas do crews focus on first?

We're ready for any situation and will be working 24/7 to get your power back on. When restoring power, our crews go to the most critical areas and work in order of priority:

1. Power generation and substations
2. Critical customers and communications
3. Mid-level infrastructure and neighborhoods
4. Individual homes and businesses*

Assisted Living is #3



Debrief:

Staff met the next day. Residents met the day after.

What went well?

- All residents followed instructions and remained safe and healthy.
- Our environmental services team is phenomenal!
- The culinary team is phenomenal!

What didn't go well?

- Regular checks and inspections on generator didn't catch the improper wiring.
- Communication plan lacked consistency. Mass communication system wasn't used until power was restored.
- Incident Commander wasn't notified until 7:30 AM, Incident Management Team was loosely formed, and regular briefings throughout the outage did not occur.
- There is no bat phone to Xcel.

Improvement Plan:

- We severed our relationship with the electrician who installed the switch box improperly.
- Walker Place will use our mass communication system for all incidents, even if door-to-door communication is provided by staff.
- The incident management team will do some additional training and exercising in 2025. Teams working on an incident more than 8-10 hours should transfer command to corporate incident management teams whose purpose is to provide relief during long-term incidents. Fatigue can cause errors.

Thank you

Questions?

