

Blackout hits Willowbrook facility

A power failure in the United Cerebral Palsy complex at the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook, has apparently not resulted in a serious medical emergency, the center's acting plant superintendent said yesterday.

Electricity to the five-building complex was cut off minutes after 3 p.m., but a stand-by emergency generator was deployed and power for medical equipment, including respirators and oxygenators, was restored in under an hour, said Joseph Sykora, the acting superintendent.

"As far as I know no one was inconvenienced," Sykora said.

Sykora commended both Con Edison and the Police Department for their help in providing the buildings with power. Six police Auxiliary Services emergency generators were brought in from throughout the city and were able to restore lights to the buildings before nightfall.

"A huge tractor-driven generator was brought in by Con Ed," Sykora said, adding that the generator will provide enough power to run refrigerators and kitchen appliances, so meals will not be a problem.

Adam Antenucci, a Con Ed spokesman, said the generator was brought from Queens late last night. He added that the power failure involved a fault in

an internal cable, on private property, but Con Ed crews were inside the center helping to locate the fault.

As of about midnight the crews had tentatively located the problem, in an underground feeder cable, but Sykora said replacement cable was not immediately available and would have to be ordered.

During a similar power failure about a year ago, he added, cable had to be ordered from a company in Virginia, and

arrived at the center two days after the initial failure.

Because of the police and Con Ed generators, however, Sykora expects no problems in meeting the facility's interim power needs. He added that the center plans to rent generators today to replace the police units, so they could be returned to the Emergency Services Division in case another emergency arises elsewhere.

— MICHAEL AZZARA JR.