

# 3 buildings at SIDC darkened

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A broken power cable left three residential buildings on the campus of the Staten Island Developmental Center in the dark yesterday and throughout last night.

Buildings 7, 5, and 9 on the site lost the lights around 8 a.m. yesterday, according to Scot Booth, the evening supervisor at the Willowbrook facility.

One hundred and fifty clients of the facility in the three buildings were affected by the blackouts. The buildings did not lose heat or water service, the supervisor said.

"Everything else is in good working order," Booth said.

However, a worker at the facility who asked to not be identified, claimed the toilets in at least one building were not functioning.

"I've been here for three years and I've never seen such a problem," the worker said. "Now, these people are going to have to take showers in the dark. It's unsafe and unsanitary."

A search crew could not locate the cut cable until 5 p.m. yesterday, nine hours after the lights went out, Booth said. No one was sure how the cable was cut, he added, but he indicated it probably was damaged in the rains and high winds Tuesday.

"It's an underground cable outside Building 7," Booth said.

"It's not very far under the surface, so it was probably damaged by the storm."

The developmental center contacted a contractor last night to repair the cable. Electrical power was still out in the three buildings this morning.

"We had a peaceful night," a spokeswoman for the center said this morning. "The lights are still out, but there weren't any problems during the night."

Booth said that if power was not restored by today, officials would try to hook up a portable generator on the grounds. "But even that could be a problem because of all the water left around here from the rain," he said.

In the meantime, the staff has been beefed up in the three buildings with each one issued a flashlight, according to Booth.

"We have 58 people, including extra security, in those three buildings," he said.

None of the clients was transferred to other buildings, Booth said.

"Everything is pretty much under control. There was no threat of fire and everything is in working order aside from the lights," the supervisor said. "The clients have plenty of staff around to assist them. With the additional people we moved in there, there is a one-to-four staff to client ratio in the three buildings."

Con Edison crews visited the facility yesterday but said the problem "was internal" and "out of their hands," according to Herb Haddad, a spokesman for the utility.

The SIDC experienced other problems during the storm Tuesday night when four feet of rainwater poured into the generating building.

The water was pumped out of the facility in four hours by firefighters from a special Brooklyn unit. The water did not reach any of the furnaces or steam generators, officials said.

Booth said there was no relation between the two incidents.