

INFORMATION PAPER  
ON  
WALTER REED NATIONAL MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER (WRNMMC)  
FACILITY-RELATED ISSUES

31 January 2025

**Summary:** Recent mechanical failures at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) brought on by extreme cold weather and aging physical plant resulted in water damage that temporarily impacted healthcare operations at WRNMMC. Defense Health Agency (DHA) and WRNMMC staff have been working diligently around the clock implementing solutions to minimize disruptions to patient care and fund the emergency work-orders and contract modifications required to return WRNMMC to full operational capability. DHA is prioritizing resources for repairs and is collaborating with the Naval Installations Command and Naval Support Activity Bethesda to implement necessary repairs. This acute issue is being managed aggressively to ensure patient care continues to be delivered safely. DHA is also working to ensure that WRNMMC, the Department's flagship military medical treatment facility, maintains its prominence as [one of the nation's top rated hospitals](#).

**Background:**

- A sprinkler burst in the penthouse of Building 2 on January 20, 2025. The Fire Department had challenges securing the leak, and approximately 60K gallons of water flowed into buildings 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 before the leak was isolated. The specific cause of the sprinkler damage is still unknown, however unseasonably cold weather and the age of physical plant facilities likely contributed to the leak.
  - Water damage impacted 11 corridors, over 50 rooms, and 5 elevators, affecting 6 different clinical services.
  - J&J Worldwide Services, the facilities management contractor at WRNMMC, was required to subcontract cleaning and restoration services due to the magnitude of damage. DHA has allocated \$806K in emergency funding to support clean up and restoration efforts. Remediation work is ongoing. While initial assessments of damages are limited to repairing interior finishes in several of the locations, the assessment of the full extent of the damage is ongoing. At no time was patient care compromised.
- At the same time, a steam leak from the condensate system on the Naval Support Activity Bethesda side disrupted operations in the Sterile Processing Division (SPD).
  - Repairs to the electrical system and steam sterilization components are required
  - Naval Support Activity (NSA) Bethesda was successfully able to reduce steam pressure to the hospital on the plant side which stopped the excess leaks in the mechanical area adjacent to SPD
  - Clean up and restoration s ongoing to address damage from radiant steam leak and condensation

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**Current operational status:**

- Steam Leak in Building 9:
  - SPD remains non-operational and is unable to use the decontamination area, instrument washers, steam sterilizers, and low temperature sterilizers until parts are onsite
  - WRNMMC is continuing to use NIH, AT Augusta Military Medical Center (ATAMMC), Kimbrough, and Andrews Air Force base to provide sterilized medical and dental equipment
- OR capacity remains limited to urgent/emergent cases only at WRNMMC
  - 56 cases have been moved to ATAMMC, Malcom Grow, and network hospitals
  - 212 scheduled patient visits have been deferred or rescheduled
- Water in Building 9 (7W and NICU):
  - Clean up and repairs have been completed in 7W and in the NICU
  - All patients have been moved back to the wards and units are fully operational
  - WRNMMC is off mother and infant care center (MICC) divert
- Water Leak in Building 2, 3, and 5:
  - Clean up and repairs are ongoing. Electrical and network capabilities are restored.
  - Primary Care Dentistry- partially operational and cases moved to hospital dentistry and the Dental School
  - Training and Administrative Spaces – partially operational and relocated throughout the campus
  - Dunkin' Donuts, Subway, Navy Federal Credit Union, and the Main Street shops are once again open for business

**Next Steps:**

- It will take approximately 6 weeks to return WRNMMC to full operations
- NAVFAC and J&J will continue to assess damage in Buildings 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 and are compiling a final list of impacts and longer term requirements.
- Surgery teams working to maximize the number of cases that can be done at outlying sites including rescheduling elective cases at Alexander T. Augusta Medical Center
- DHA is completing an enterprise-wide review of all facility maintenance backlog requirements