

POLICY

EMERGENCY CLOSING

Emergency closings are defined as those situations which make it impossible to carry on the normal instructional activities of the College and/or create situations which could be harmful to the safety of students, employees, or college visitors. Some examples are: weather-related situations, bomb threats, or utility failures.

When emergency conditions merit closing considerations, administration shall follow the College's Emergency Closing or Cancellations Procedures.

History:
10.29.09 Adopted

PROCEDURES**EMERGENCY CLOSING OR CANCELLATIONS****Purpose:**

In accordance with [MnSCU Board Policy 4.4 - Weather/Short-Term Emergency Closings](#), the following procedures are followed when it becomes necessary to close the college campuses or cancel academic or non-academic activities, or delay the opening of the college due to inclement weather or other emergency conditions. These procedures also describe working conditions and the compensation status of employees during the time the college is closed.

Definitions:**A. Closing the College:**

This means to close all operations other than those operations deemed essential to the protection of life and property. Closing the college refers to the cancellation of classes, student, faculty and staff activities, and meetings. All general offices are closed.

B. Delayed Opening:

This refers to closing of all operations for a designated period of time other than those operations deemed essential to the protection of life and property.

C. Cancellation of Classes and/or Activities:

Cancellation of classes (off-campus or on-campus) refers to the cancellation of one, several, or all classes, in the absence of officially closing the entire college campus.

Cancellation of non-academic activities refers to cancellation of an event such as athletic events, theatrical productions, concerts or workshops.

Procedures:**Assessment:**

If a weather emergency situation develops, college officials will contact local authorities, including the Minnesota State Highway Patrol and other law enforcement offices, to assess the severity of the storm. Once the information has been collected, the College President or President's designee will make the determination on whether to cancel classes or to close the college.

PROCEDURES**EMERGENCY CLOSING OR CANCELLATIONS, continued**Cancellation of Classes Due to Weather or Other Emergencies:

- a. The authority to cancel classes due to weather conditions or other emergencies resides with the College President or the President's designee.
- b. Support Staff: If a staff member chooses to be absent from work, they must take vacation leave or use earned compensatory time when classes are cancelled.
- c. Faculty: Faculty members are expected to make appropriate curricular adjustments or duty adjustments, per MSCF contract.

Campus Closure Due to Weather or Other Emergencies:

- a. The authority to close a college campus when a weather or other emergency exists resides with the College President or the President's designee. The closure of state agencies by Minnesota Management and Budget does not apply to MnSCU institutions.
- b. When a college **closing** is declared, all employees except weather essential employees are excused from work with pay. A college closure applies to all employees, without regard to labor contracts. However, the essential emergency employees are not excused from work and will be paid at their regular rate of pay. A declaration of a college closure will clearly identify the timeframe when employees are excused from work. Employees are instructed to listen to radio and television stations when storms or emergency situations might carry over from one day into two or more days.
- c. Weather Essential Employees: The Physical Plant Director has been identified as a weather essential employee who may not be excused from work duty during campus closings.

Notification of Campus-Wide Cancellations or Closings:

Multiple methods of notification are used. Notification methods for campus-wide cancellations and closures (which take into consideration students and employees with special needs) will include the following as appropriate:

- a) Local and regional radio and television stations:
 - KWLM 1340/Q102/100.1 Big Country Radio (Willmar)
 - KDJS 1590/K-95.3/The River 97.3 Radio (Willmar)
 - KDUZ 1260/KARP 106.9 Radio (Hutchinson)
 - WCCO Radio and Television (Minneapolis)
 - KSTP/KSAX Television (St. Paul/Alexandria)

PROCEDURES**EMERGENCY CLOSING OR CANCELLATIONS, continued**

- b) Class cancellation lines:
 - Hutchinson Campus: 320-234-8700
 - Willmar Campus: 320-222-8277
- c) College Email
- d) College Website: www.ridgewater.edu
- e) Star Alert (text messaging system)

Whenever possible, decisions to cancel day classes will be made by approximately 6:00 a.m., and decisions to cancel night classes or activities will be made by 3:00 p.m. In certain emergencies, an effort will be made to announce closures or cancellations prior to the 10:00 p.m. television newscasts.

In the event of campus closure or class cancellation for any emergency situation, the College President or the President's designee will notify the MnSCU Public Affairs Office.

Other Emergencies:

Other emergencies covered by these procedures would include such things as fire, tornado, bomb threat, other serious problems related to mechanical or electrical systems, or any other extremely hazardous situation in or around the college campuses.

History:

10.18.04 Adopted

10.29.09 Revised