

**SITUATIONAL WEATHER AND CAMPUS EMERGENCY PROCESS**

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**POLICY**

In accordance with Minnesota State Board Policy 4.4, the following policy and procedure are followed when it becomes necessary to close the college or cancel academic and/or non-academic activities at the college due to extreme weather or other short-term emergency conditions. A description of working conditions and the compensation status of employees during the time the college is closed is included.

**Authority**

The authority to close the college campus, cancel classes and/or activities when weather or other short-term emergencies exist resides with the College President or the President's designee. The closure of the state agencies by the Commissioner of the Department of Employee Relations (MMB) does not supersede the authority of the College President; however, the Governor's orders supersede the authority of the College President.

**Definition of College or Campus Closed**

"College or Campus Closed" means to close all buildings to the public and to students and employees except for those employees who are deemed essential (as defined below) while maintaining college operations through virtual or remote means. Closing the college or a campus results in the cancelation of all in-person activities and classes. The campus closed status can be declared at one or both campuses depending on the nature of the emergency situation.

**Declaring an Emergency and Campus Closure**

When an emergency is declared:

1. The College will close campus buildings and sites to all internal and external use but will make every reasonable effort to continue to operate/function as usual via remote means.
2. Essential employees (as defined within this policy) will be required to report to campus as determined by their supervisor.
3. Employees who reported to work and were sent home should not be paid for more than their regular scheduled hours.
4. Employees on approved sick or any other type of approved leave shall not have such leave time restored to their balances nor be paid for the emergency leave time unless they are called back to work.
5. All in-person, on-campus courses and instructional activities scheduled on a weather emergency day *will be cancelled*, as well as all other in-person/on-campus events, meetings, games, etc.
6. Faculty with on-campus instructional assignments are encouraged to pivot to instructional delivery to employ instructional activities accessed on-line. Where such a pivot is not feasible or practical, faculty with on-campus instructional assignments are expected to engage in other professional responsibilities in lieu of instruction on days when on-campus classes and activities are cancelled.

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- 44 a) All class sessions for online courses and online class sessions for hybrid courses scheduled to meet on  
45 a weather or other emergency day will meet as scheduled.  
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- 47 b) All faculty, staff and administrators will be expected to perform their duties via telework on a weather or  
48 other emergency day and be available to participate in work activities, meetings, communication, etc.  
49 via remote means.  
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- 51 c) Employees who are authorized and scheduled to telework from home or an alternative site are  
52 expected to continue to work if the short-term emergency does not prevent them from safely performing  
53 work at their home or alternative site.  
54 i. If employees have challenges to telework related to personal circumstances (such as elder  
55 care, childcare responsibilities or technology/internet issues), they will work with their  
56 supervisor to determine possible and appropriate leave/work options.  
57 ii. Employees in positions where telework is not practical as determined by the president or  
58 designee may be excused from work with pay.  
59
- 60 d) When evaluating whether alternative working arrangements are practical, considerations will include  
61 whether an employee's duties and responsibilities will be altered substantially by the closure, and  
62 whether the employee has the means, proper conditions, equipment, and ability to access and secure  
63 data.  
64 i. Staff who are not in essential positions and cannot effectively carry out their normal work  
65 duties via telework will be paid for their normal work shift for the day and use MSL leave code  
66 on their timesheets, *with approval of the supervisor*.  
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**Canceled Classes and Activities**

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69 Cancellation of classes and activities means cancelling all classes in the absence of officially closing the entire  
70 college. Cancellation of non-academic activities refers to cancellation of activities such as athletic events, theatrical  
71 productions, concerts, or workshops. Cancellation of classes and/or activities **does not** excuse any employee for  
72 work.  
73

- 74 1. When classes are canceled but the college is not closed, individual faculty shall take personal leave or make  
75 appropriate curricular adjustments as approved by their supervisor.  
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- 77 2. When non-academic activities are canceled, the activities shall be rescheduled as appropriate.  
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- 79 3. During inclement weather when a campus(es) is not closed, supervisors may grant personal leave or vacation  
80 leave to employees who find it necessary to leave work early or who cannot make it into work.  
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**83 Work Responsibility**

84 Closing of the college or campuses and/or cancellation of classes or other activities does not excuse any employee  
85 from meeting the normal requirements and scheduled activities of their position.

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- 87 1. Employees, including faculty, may request personal leave, vacation leave, or use earned comp time when  
88 classes or other activities are cancelled, and they choose to be absent from work.
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- 90 2. Employees may use sick leave in the event a dependent family member's school or care facility is closed due to  
91 weather or public emergency.
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- 93 3. Faculty with on-campus instructional assignments are encouraged to pivot to instructional delivery to employ  
94 instructional activities accessed on-line. Where such a pivot is not feasible or practical, faculty with on-campus  
95 instructional assignments are expected to engage in other professional responsibilities in lieu of instruction on  
96 days when on-campus classes and activities are cancelled.
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**98 Essential Employees**

99 The Vice President of Finance & Operations shall identify and maintain a list of essential personnel who must report  
100 to work during times of campus closure due to weather or other type of short-term emergency.

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102 The following positions are deemed essential during emergencies situations: Physical Plant Director, Plant  
103 Maintenance Engineers, General Maintenance Worker(s) and/or Lead, and Groundskeeper(s). Essential  
104 employees should work with the Physical Plant Director for direction.

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**106 Decision-Making and Campus Notification for Weather Emergencies**

107 College administration will strive to provide sufficient advance notice about potential weather emergency situations  
108 so employees can prepare in advance and take their college-assigned laptops and work materials home so they are  
109 able to telework the following day(s) if needed as described above.

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111 When possible, decisions on college or campus closures, delayed opening, or closing early will be made by 6:00  
112 am the morning of a weather situation, and by early afternoon in cases of closing a campus early. In situations  
113 where we close the college or a campus midday, we will manage class cancellations as needed/possible based on  
114 the timeframe and circumstances involved in each situation.

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116 Notifications concerning the cancellation of classes, activities or campus closure will be communicated through  
117 multiple channels to employees, students and the public. These may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

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- 119 1. Star Alert – emergency notification via Star Alert text messaging to all registered students and  
120 employees. Voice mail and email messages will be sent to office and home phones and computers as selected  
121 by the student or employee.
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- 123 2. Student and Employee Email Notification: All students and employees will receive emergency notification via  
124 their Ridgewater email account.
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- 126 3. Website and Social Media Announcements – Notices will be posted on the main page of the Ridgewater  
 127 website ([www.ridgewater.edu](http://www.ridgewater.edu)) as well as Ridgewater College’s social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram,  
 128 etc.)  
 129
- 130 4. Radio Announcements: We will alert the following local/regional radio stations to the college’s emergency  
 131 status. Media sources include:  
 132 a) Lakeland Broadcasting: KWLM 1340/Q102/100.1 Big Country Radio (Willmar)  
 133 b) KDUZ 1260/KARP 106.9 Radio (Hutchinson)  
 134
- 135 5. The Minnesota State Communications Office will be notified via email, text message or telephone after any  
 136 decision by a president or designee to cancel classes and/or activities or close campuses.  
 137

**Assessment of Weather Conditions**

138 Weather conditions are assessed using available information from the MN Department of Transportation, the  
 139 National Weather Service, and local media. Weather-related decisions made by area high schools and other  
 140 colleges may also be taken into consideration. If weather conditions constitute a threat to the health and safety of  
 141 college employees and students, the president or designee will determine if a college or campus closure will take  
 142 place.  
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**Other Emergencies**

145 Per Minnesota State Board Policy 4.4, the college president is required to maintain a list of other possible  
 146 emergencies that may require campus closure, class cancellation, cancellation of non-academic  
 147 activities, or campus evacuation. This list contains the following emergencies but is not to be considered inclusive:  
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- 149 1. Bomb Threat  
 150 2. Chemical spills  
 151 3. Fire  
 152 4. Security Incident  
 153 5. Other Unknown Emergencies  
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**Communication of Situational Weather and Campus Emergency Process**

155 Management will inform employees and students of the Situational Weather and Campus Emergency Process  
 156 using one or more of the following methods:  
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- 159 1. An annual fall semester email from the college president’s office to all students and employees.  
 160 2. Publication on the college website.  
 161 3. A courtesy email reminder about the Situational Weather and Campus Emergency Process to students and  
 162 employees when the National Weather Service is predicting severe winter weather.  
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 164 *History:*

165 *10.18.04 Adopted 10.29.09 Revised*  
 166 *01.21.21 Proposed, Reviewed for Equity Compliance; 06.01.21 Revised*  
 167 *08.24.21 Class Cancellation Information Updated in Part 6, Subpart B, Item 5.*  
 168 *10.17.24 Proposed; 12.06.24 Revised*  
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