WEATHER/SHORT TERM EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

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 operations other than those deemed essential (as defined below) to the protection of life and property. Closing the college results in the cancelation of all classes, student, faculty and staff activities, and meetings. All general offices are closed. The campus closed status can be declared at one or both campuses depending upon the location and nature of the emergency.

Declaring an Emergency and Campus Closure

When an emergency is declared:

- All College employees are excused from work with pay. Earn code "MSL" should be used on AFSCME, MMA, and MAPE employee timesheets.
- Essential employees (as defined within this policy) will be required to report to campus as determined by their supervisor and will be paid at their regular rate of pay.
- Employees who reported to work and were sent home should not be paid for more than their regular scheduled hours.
- 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.
- All in-person, on-campus courses, online synchronous and asynchronous 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.
- If the College remains open, employees may use sick leave in the event a dependent family member's school or care facility is closed due to weather or public emergency.

Canceled Classes and Activities

Cancelation of classes and activities means cancelling all classes in the absence of officially closing the entire college. Cancelation of non-academic activities refers to cancelation of activities such as athletic events, theatrical productions, or workshops. Cancelation of classes and/or activities **does not** excuse any employee for work.

- When classes are canceled but the college is not closed, individual faculty shall take personal leave or make appropriate curricular adjustments as approved by their supervisor.
- When non-academic activities are canceled, the activities shall be rescheduled as appropriate.

- During inclement weather when a campus(es) is not closed, supervisors may grant personal leave or vacation leave to employees who find it necessary to leave work early or who cannot make it into work.

Essential Employees

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

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

Decision-Making and Campus Notification for Weather Emergencies

When possible, decisions on college or campus closures, delayed opening, or closing early will be made by 6:00 a.m. the morning of a weather situation, and by early afternoon in the case of closing a campus early. In situations where the college or a campus is closed midday, class cancellations will be handled as needed based on the timeframe and circumstances involved in each situation.

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

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

Assessment of Weather Conditions

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

Other Emergencies

Per Minnesota State Board Policy 4.4, the college president is required to maintain a list of other possible emergencies that may require campus closure, class cancelation, cancelation of non-academic activities, or campus evacuation. This list contains the following emergencies but is not to be considered inclusive:

- Bomb Threat
- Chemical spills
- Fire
- Security Incident
- Other Unknown Emergencies

Communication of Weather and Campus Emergency Process

Management will inform employees and students of the Weather and Campus Emergency Process using one or more of the following methods:

- An annual fall semester email from the college president's office to all students and employees.
- Publication on the college website.
- A courtesy email reminder about the Weather and Campus Emergency Process to students and employees when the National Weather Service is predicting severe winter weather.

History:
10.18.2004 Adopted 10.29.2009 Revised
01.21.2021 Proposed, Reviewed for Equity Compliance; 06.01.2021 Revised
08.24.2021 Class Cancellation Information Updated in Part 6, Subpart B, Item 5.
10.17.2024 Proposed; 12.06.2024 Revised
08.31.2026 Proposed; 10.28.2026 Revised