

Policies and Procedures

Chapter S4 – Human Resources

S4.7.1 Weather / Short-Term Emergency Closing Procedure

Responsible Administrator

Vice President of Human Resources

Purpose


This procedure is in accordance with Minnesota State Board Policy 4.4 – Weather/Short-Term Emergency Closings (click [here](#) for a link to the system office policy). The following procedure is followed when it becomes necessary to close the college partially or completely impacting some or all employees and students due to weather or a short-term emergency.

Responsibility

The Board Policy delegates authority to close the College for short-term emergencies to the College President or designee. The decisions regarding weather and short-term emergencies will be defined in scope of all prevailing circumstances/conditions and within the context of care to ensure the safety of the employees and students traveling to and from campus for work and instructional purposes.

These guidelines and instructions for short term closure are outlined under Board of Trustee Policy 4.4 and this procedure complies with board policy for actions taken herein. The President holds the authority for all emergency closures that do not exceed a period of six (6) calendar days. The College President shall notify the Chancellor of any campus closures that prohibit normal campus operations due to a short-term emergency closure, when any short-term closure conditions prevail for more than (2) two consecutive days of closure or closure that exceeds six (6) days in duration. The President shall notify the Chancellor when the college closes for a short-term emergency under any conditions to answer any inquires made to the system office regarding this status.

The Governor of Minnesota has emergency powers to issue an executive order to change the work schedule of executive branch employees in cases of natural disaster or other emergencies [M.S. Section 12.21], these orders apply to Minnesota State employees including faculty and staff and will impact students.

College President: 

Date of Adoption: November 7, 2024

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Date: 1-7-2025

S4.4 Weather / Short -Term Emergency Closing Procedure

Weather and Short-Term Emergency Closings:

One or more of the following decisions could be made by the College President or designee using one or a combination of the following scenarios when the conditions that warrant a short-term emergency require such.

- A. **Close All College Operations.** The following conditions apply when the College buildings have not opened. In this instance, employees deemed essential may be required to report for some or all their scheduled work shift to maintain on-going and essential operations of the college buildings and maintenance.
 - a. Employees who are authorized and scheduled to telework or have the means and are approved to work from home or an alternative site, will continue to work if the short-term emergency does not prevent them from safely performing work at their home or alternative site.
 - b. Per Board Policy, employees who can work or are scheduled to work remotely on this day, faculty who are scheduled to teach online (synchronous or asynchronous) or an online session of a hybrid course, and students who are scheduled in online, hybrid, or student choice multi-modal course for the day, a closure has no impact as the conditions that caused the closure do not apply due to no safety risk to employees whose work can be performed in a location off-campus and to students whose learning environment is occurring online are presumed a safe place to perform such work or learning. As such, work will continue for employees working remotely, instruction will continue for online, hybrid, or student choice multi-modal and students are expected to continue classes (synchronous or asynchronous online; online session of hybrid classes) as scheduled. In this instance, all instructional due dates in these classes can still be enforced.
 - c. If there are synchronous online meetings, events, or activities (e.g., student-faculty/staff meetings, office hours), these should be held as scheduled if possible.

- B. **Early Closure.** Early closure refers to when the College buildings have opened and are operational, employees who are scheduled to work on campus have reported to work on campus, students are on campus for instruction and other purposes or activities, and if conditions exist or materialize to conditions that are predicted to pose a risk to the safe travel for employees and students back home, a decision of early closure is made at the earliest time possible to accommodate employees and students safe travel home. The following conditions apply.
 - a. At the time that is indicated for the early closure, all on-campus classes are cancelled, and all on-campus events and activities will be cancelled for the remainder of the day and/or evening. In this instance, instructional due dates for on-campus classes are delayed until at least the next regular instructional day. Depending on the time of closure and conditions that prompt the closure, evening schedules/shifts for essential employees who are on campus and those who have not yet reported to work may be adjusted. Essential employees will be notified of their work status by the Vice President of Administration.
 - b. Per Board Policy, employees who can work or are scheduled to work remotely on this day, faculty who are scheduled to teach online (synchronous or asynchronous) or an

online session of a hybrid course, and students who are scheduled in an online, hybrid, or student choice multi-modal course for the day, an early closure has no impact as the conditions that caused the early closure do not apply due to no safety risk to employees whose work can be performed in a location off-campus and to students whose learning environment is occurring online are presumed in a safe place to perform such work or learning. As such, work will continue for employees working remotely, instruction will continue for online, hybrid, or student choice multi-modal, and students are expected to continue classes (synchronous or asynchronous online; online session of hybrid classes) as scheduled. In this instance, all instructional due dates in these classes can still be enforced.

- c. If there are synchronous online meetings, events, or activities (e.g., student-faculty/staff meetings, office hours) scheduled after the early closure, these should be held as scheduled if possible.

C. **Delayed Opening:** Delayed opening refers to adjusting the time the College buildings will open on any given day due to early weather conditions. There may be times when a delayed open is required to give employees and students more time to travel to campus safely. Employees and students will be notified of the delayed opening time using the STAR Alert system for emergency communications. Essential employees will be notified of their time to report if their shift is impacted by the delay.

- a. At the time that is scheduled for the College building to open for the delayed opening, classes scheduled on campus will begin at the next available schedule block closest to the time the College building will open. Students are expected to attend all classes for the day when the College building opens regardless of modality and follow their course syllabus attendance requirements. Work and classes will start and continue at the scheduled time.
- b. If an on-campus class does not meet as scheduled due to the delayed opening, instructional due dates for the on-campus class are delayed until at least the next regular instructional day.
- c. Employees are expected to report to work by the time the College building is open under this condition, or employees must request and take appropriate leave. Should employees wish not to report to work at the delayed start time on campus, appropriate leave must be requested and approved. Should students wish not to attend classes, the attendance policy for the course or any exceptions to such resides with the faculty. Faculty who are scheduled to teach a class that is scheduled once the College building is open and who choose to cancel the class must take the appropriate steps of notification of the class cancellation and take appropriate leave.
- d. The delayed opening of the physical College building **does not impact** online or hybrid classes (synchronous or asynchronous online; online sessions of hybrid classes) or remote work as work and learning can occur as scheduled in a safe environment during the period of the delayed opening. As such, work will continue for employees working remotely, instruction will continue for online and hybrid classes, and students are expected to continue classes (synchronous or asynchronous online; online session of hybrid classes) as scheduled. In this instance, all instructional due dates in these classes can still be enforced.
- e. If there are synchronous online meetings, events, or activities (e.g., student-faculty/staff meetings, office hours) scheduled during the delayed opening period, these should be held as scheduled if possible.

D. No Closure Decision:

- a. There may be times when the College building will remain open and classes are cancelled. In this case, the cancellation of classes does not excuse any employee from work if the College building remains open.
- b. There may be times when the College building will remain open and the College may cancel activities or events held on campus even when classes are not cancelled. (Refer to Early Closure section of procedure). In this case, the cancellation of events and activities does not excuse any employee from work if the College building remains open.
- c. Any employee may choose not to report to work based on their own personal reasons. In such cases, employees must follow the same procedures for an absence at work, such as faculty must follow all notification protocols about the class cancellation, staff or faculty report absence from work to their supervisor, and staff or faculty must use appropriate leave.

Close, Close Early or Delay Openings Decisions will be made based on the following:

Decisions to close, close early or delay opening the campus will be determined by the College President or President's designee, with the consultation with members of Executive Cabinet, Public Safety, Facilities and Maintenance and Marketing & Communications. State, local, county and municipalities may be consulted and any public information from Federal, State and local municipalities that are available pertaining to the reasons to make such decision may be used to inform the decision by President or the President's designee. The Vice President of Administration is deemed the primary delegated administrator in the absence of the President. If the Vice President of Administration is not available to serve as designee, the delegation of the President's authority is given to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness as secondary. Under all conditions, if the President is available, consultation should occur before any decision is made. Appropriate notification will be made to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Office when the decision is made.

As these decisions are required for weather or other emergency conditions, assessment of the road conditions shall be the responsibility of the Vice President of Administration in consultation with the Campus Safety and Security and the Director of Facilities, all of whom shall advise the President or designee of the determination that conditions are present or are predicted that may require a closure, early closure, or a delayed opening decision.

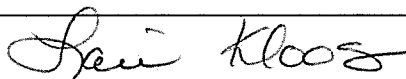
I. Essential Employees

- a. The Vice President of Administration shall identify and inform essential personnel who must report to work during times the college is closed or when shifts may be changed due to a delayed opening or early closure. The Vice President is responsible for all communications to all employees designated as essential for purposes of closing due to inclement weather or other emergencies. The positions typically considered essential are as follows: general maintenance and leads, general repair, grounds, building maintenance foreman, building services foreman, physical plant supervisor, plant engineers and leads, all facilities supervisors and campus safety and security.

II. Student and Employee Notifications

- a. Notifications of campus closure, delayed opening, or early closure will be notified through the Star Alert system as the primary communication to employees and students will be through email, text messages, social media, and college website for updates. Absence of any notifications, regular building hours apply. All determination of closing or delayed opening shall be made by 5:00 a.m. when possible or as soon as possible. Early closing decisions when the campus is fully operational will be made as conditions dictate to ensure the safe travels of employees and students.
- b. The Director of Safety and Security or designee is the lead to send timely messages that are approved and appropriate to the prevailing conditions. These messages will be sent to the college community immediately after the decision is made by the College President or designee.
- c. The Director of Marketing and Communications or designee will be consulted and may assist with the creation of templated messages pertaining to the short-term emergency. The Director of Marketing and Communications will also keep the most updated status and information about the open/closure on the College's website.
- d. The main switchboard recorded message will contain information about the college's closing or delayed opening.
- e. The Vice President of Human Resources will be responsible for notifying employees of the policies that apply to leave, pay and employee absences during the duration of a short-term emergency.
- f. The Vice President of Administration shall identify and inform essential personnel who must report to work during times the college is closed or when shifts may be changed due to a delayed opening or early closure. The Vice President is responsible for all communication and communications to all employees designated as essential for purposes of closing due to inclement weather or other emergencies. The positions typically considered essential are as follows: general maintenance and leads, general repair, grounds, building maintenance foreman, building services foreman, physical plant supervisor, plant engineers and leads, all facilities supervisors and campus safety and security.

College President:



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