Weather & Short-Term Emergency Closings Policy

**Custodian of Policy:** Vice President of Finance and Administration

**Relevant Minnesota State System Policy: [4.4 Weather/Short-Term Emergency Closings](http://www.minnstate.edu/board/policy/404.html" \o "4.4 Weather/Short Term Emergency Closings)**

**Relevant Procedures:** [**Administrative Procedure Weather Emergency Plan**](https://www.mnstate.edu/about/policies-procedures/procedures/weather-closings/)

**Effective Date:** Spring 2020

**Last Review:** Spring 2025

**Next Review:**Spring 2032

Policy

Part 1. Cancellation of classes due to weather or other short-term emergencies.

The authority to cancel classes due to weather conditions or other short-term emergencies resides with the President or designee. Cancellation of classes does not excuse any employee from work. Each individual must take into account their own circumstances for travel and decide accordingly whether or not travel is safe. Employees of the university may take earned sick and safe time, personal leave, vacation leave, or use earned compensatory time when classes are canceled and they choose not to work.

Part 2. Campus closing due to weather or other short-term emergencies.

The President or designee may close the university campus due to weather or other short-term emergencies for six (6) calendar days or less. The Long-Term Emergency Management Policy is applicable for longer closures. The closure of state agencies by the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget does not apply to Minnesota State institutions.

The President or designee shall consult with appropriate entities and individuals to assess weather and travel conditions and to make a decision accordingly.

Notification of campus closings will occur using the university emergency alert system, the university website, and local radio/television stations. The notification of a campus closure shall, whenever possible, clearly identify the timeframe of the closure. When a campus closing is declared, university employees with a nonessential designation are expected to work from home or an approved alternate location if they have an approved telework plan or have a university-issued laptop and can complete their work successfully off-campus. In consultation with the employee, an employee’s supervisor shall determine whether an employee can successfully complete their work off-campus. If these employees choose not to work or must care for a family member who is affected by a closure, then they shall enter earned sick and safe time or other appropriate leave. Employees with a nonessential designation who do not meet the criteria above are excused from work with pay and do not need to enter leave. A campus closure applies to all employees without regard to labor contract.

Certain essential employees are required to report to campus when the campus is closed. These employees will be paid at their regular rate. Each individual must take into account their own circumstances for travel and decide accordingly whether or not travel is safe. Essential employees required to report to campus may take earned sick and safe time, personal leave, vacation leave, or use earned compensatory time when the campus is closed and they choose to be absent from work.

Other essential employees may not be required to report to campus during part of or the entirety of the closure, as determined by their supervisor. The policy language above related to employees with a nonessential designation apply to these essential employees during their normal workhours if they are not required to work on campus.

A list of employees designated as essential shall be prepared by the Vice President of Finance and Administration at the beginning of each academic year and reflect a thoughtful assessment of the university’s needs during a weather or short-term emergency. The list shall distinguish essential employees who are required to report on campus and those that may be required to report on campus. The list will be offered for consultation through the Facilities, Grounds, & Safety Committee no later than October 1 each year. If there are substantive changes to the list, it will also be offered for consultation through the Meet and Confer process with affected Bargaining Units.

Employees designated as essential shall be notified of their status prior to hire and during an annual review of their position description no later than December 31 each year. Employees designated as essential shall also be notified of their status after the annual list has been through the shared governance process.

Definitions

Essential Employee: Positions and employees of the university who provide services that are essential to the well-being of students, those service activities available for students living on campus, and those functions deemed essential to personal safety and the protection or preservation of the state’s investments such as property, during an emergency.

Rationale

This policy outlines the decision-making processes for the cancellation of classes or closure of the University in the case of weather or other short-term emergency. Since the nature of emergencies varies, there is a need to determine with each occurrence, what services will be available and what events will take place as scheduled. Additionally, this policy recognizes the need to maintain the availability of essential services that support the safety and well-being of the campus community and the integrity and security of University facilities.