



Weather/ Short Term Emergency Closings Riverland Policy #4.4

PURPOSE:

To ensure the safety of Riverland Community College's students and employees during severe weather, balancing safety with maintaining effective college services.

APPLICABILITY:

Weather-related decisions to close Riverland are based on weather data from various sources like Minnesota Department of Transportation, State Patrol, and local police near the campuses.

The President or a designated person decides on school closures, affecting all campuses (Austin, Albert Lea, Owatonna).

Closure announcements are made by 6:00 a.m. for daytime or 3:00 p.m. for evening closures, communicated via the Riverland website, STAR ALERT system, and media.

Students are required to check D2L/Brightspace for course-specific cancellations or E-Learning instructions during weather-related or short-term closures. Students must communicate with instructors if they intend to miss class due to weather.

Other emergencies may include, but not be limited to, the threat and/or presence of an active shooter, bomb threat and/or explosion, natural or manufactured disaster, act of terrorism, other potentially hazardous situations or any threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the college and/or surrounding communities.

SCOPE: Applies to all Riverland students and employees

DEFINITIONS:

Class Cancellation: Stopping one or more classes at any Riverland location without closing the entire college. Employees are not excused from work. With supervisor approval, employees, including faculty, may use personal leave, vacation leave, or earned compensatory time if they choose to be absent.

- In consultation with their dean, faculty may make an independent decision to cancel their classes/activities due to weather or other exigencies. In these cases, the faculty must follow the [4.4.1 class cancellation procedure](#). Faculty are also required to complete and submit documentation for personal leave through the normal process.

Non-Academic Activity Cancellation: Stopping events like sports, theatre, concerts, or workshops. Employees are not excused from work. With supervisor approval, employees, including faculty, may use personal leave, vacation leave, or earned compensatory time if they choose to be absent.

College Closure: Shutting down all operations at all locations, including classes, activities, and offices. Only essential staff report to work. Employees are excused with pay if alternative work arrangements are impractical, as determined by the president or designee. Use the MSL leave code on timesheets.

- Employees who report to work and are sent home should not be paid for more than their regularly scheduled hours. Employees shall not be enriched through additional compensation, including compensatory time, or increased benefits from an emergency.
- Employees required by their appointing authority to remain at work should not be paid for more than their regular scheduled hours or the actual number of hours worked, including overtime.
- An absence with pay for an individual emergency situation must not exceed the equivalent of two workdays unless the chancellor authorizes a longer period. Campus closure applies to all employees without regard to labor contracts. Weather or other emergency essential employees who are not excused from work will be paid at their regular rate of pay.

Delayed Opening: Starting operations later than usual. Only essential staff report at regular times. Employees will use MSL leave for only the hours disrupted by the delay to meet their usual hours total for the day.

E-Learning: During inclement weather and other short-term emergencies, campus administrators may designate an E-Learning Day.

Faculty:

- Faculty members whose courses include an online component are expected to teach from a safe location.
- Faculty members with on-campus assignments should be prepared to pivot to online instruction or provide alternative curricular activities if on-campus activities are canceled.
- Faculty who chose not to provide online or alternative learning activities will take personal leave unless their supervising Dean approves alternative compensatory duties for that day.
- Consider students' limited access to electricity, Internet, campus, and transportation during inclement weather. Deans will consider these factors when excusing faculty from E-Learning Days.

Staff:

- Where feasible, 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. Those choosing to telework must communicate this with their supervisor and HR for proper reporting of work location (outside of Minnesota state). No signed forms are required for weather-related telework.
- Employees who are not excused from work due to weather or other emergencies may still receive their regular pay.

Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST): Employees and some student workers may be eligible for ESST. Please refer to the [MN Department of Labor ESST link](#) or Human Resources to determine eligibility.

DOES THIS POLICY HAVE A PROCEDURE? Yes

LIST RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES OR FORMS:

Minnesota State [Policy 4.4 Weather / Short Term Emergency Closings](#)
[4.4.1 Class Cancellation – Faculty Procedure](#)

Submit completed form and policy to the Cabinet Member responsible for the division affected by the proposal. This section to be completed by President's Office.

Date Issued: June 2013

Responsible Division / Author: Human Resources / VPER& HR & VPAI

Date Revised: Feb 2019 removed media identifiers; August 2024 e-learning, ESST language