

G-022 EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURE

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Southwest Minnesota State University

Procedure for Emergency Closing Procedures Closing of University, Cancellation of Classes or Activities, Delayed Opening

1. Purpose

In accordance with MnSCU Policy 4.4, the following procedure will be used when it becomes necessary to close the University, cancel academic or non-academic activities, or delay the opening of the University due to, but not limited to, severe winter weather, tornadoes, fire, bomb threats and explosions. This procedure will also describe working conditions and the compensation status of employees during the time the University is closed.

2. Definitions

- a. **Closing the University:** Closing the University means to close all operations other than those operations deemed essential to well-being of students, those service activities available for students living on campus, and those functions deemed essential to personal safety and the protection of property. Closing the University results in the cancellation of classes, activities and meetings hosted/sponsored by students, faculty, staff or any non-university organization. General offices are closed.
- b. **Delayed Opening:** Refers to closing of all operations for a designated period of time other than those operations deemed essential to well-being of students, those service activities available for students living on campus, and those functions deemed essential to personal safety and the protection of property.
- c. **Cancellation of Classes and/or Other Activities:**
 - Cancellation of classes (off-campus or on-campus) means to cancel one, several, or all classes, in the absence of officially closing the entire University.
 - Cancellation of non-academic activities refers to cancellation of an event such as athletic events, concerts, theatrical productions, workshops, etc.
- d. **Essential Employees:** 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 of property during an emergency. The following positions are designated as essential for purposes of closing due to inclement weather or other emergencies: Physical Plant supervisors, Groundskeepers, University Public Safety personnel, one mechanical staff employee, General Maintenance Workers from day shift M & E funded buildings, General Maintenance Workers from Revenue Funded Buildings, Residential Life staff,

Director of Student Center, Assistant Director for Student Center Operations, Intramural Director, and one nurse. These employees will be on duty whenever an emergency is declared. If, in the Physical Plant Director's judgment, the possibility of a late start or closure in the next day exists, (s)he will notify essential employees of this possibility. (S)He will then make every effort to provide adequate sleeping accommodations (at no charge) for essential employees who request such in a timely manner.

During an emergency closing, if in the supervisor's judgment, services that are essential to the well-being of students or to the personal safety and protection of property are no longer needed, essential employees may be released from work with pay.

3. Authority

In accordance with MnSCU Policy 4.4, the authority to close the university campus, cancel classes or other activities when an emergency exists resides with the President or President's designee. The closure of state agencies by the Commissioner of the Department of Employee Relations does not apply to SMSU or other MnSCU institutions. Should the Governor of Minnesota declare a state of emergency that results in closure, SMSU will follow that declaration.

4. Procedure and Notification

a. Closing or Delayed Opening:

The President or President's designees shall determine when the University will be closed, the University activity or operations that must be maintained during the closure and estimate, if possible, the duration of the emergency. Appropriate notification will be made to the MnSCU Board Office as the decision is made.

The responsibility of closing the University may be delegated to the following persons in order:

1. Chief Executive (President)
2. Chief Academic Officer (Provost)
3. Chief Financial Officer (VP for Finance and Administration)
4. Chief Student Affairs Officer (Assoc VP for Student Affairs)
5. Chief Advancement Officer (VP for Advancement)

In the absence of all of the above, the person designated as chief operating officer at the time will have the responsibility for canceling classes or closing the University.

As the decision is made to close or delay opening of the University, the following individuals will be notified:

Physical Plant Director
Provost/Vice Presidents
Director of Communications & Marketing
Director of Public Safety
President

Each of the above will be responsible for specific notification to essential employees, media and department heads/supervisors, the University Scheduling Office and the University Switchboard. It is expected that each department head will develop a network among employees to effectively notify individuals

5. Cancellation of Classes/Activity when the University is not Closed:

1. Cancellation of Classes – the decision to cancel one class, several classes or all classes, off-campus or on-campus, shall be made by the President or his/her designee. When classes are cancelled, appropriate curricular adjustments shall be made by faculty on an individual basis.
2. Non Academic Events – the decision to cancel a non-academic event, in the absence of closing the University, will be made by the director of the activity in consultation with his/her supervisor.

6. Notification:

Notification of the closing, delayed opening of the University, or canceling of all classes will be made by the Director of Communications & Marketing. The Director of Communications & Marketing will insure an appropriate external message is placed on the voice mail of the following telephones:

- Campus switchboard – 507-537-7678
- President's phone – 507-537-6272
- Provost's Office phone – 507-537-6246
- Dean's phone – 507-537-6251
- Scheduling – 507-537-7110
- The Director of Public Safety will send out a text message on Star Alert.
- The Webmaster will place the appropriate message on the SMSU website located at www.SMSU.edu (<http://www.SMSU.edu>). For weather emergencies, click on Weather Related Announcements.
- Through announcements on radio, employees and students will be advised of the University closing to include the following statement: **Southwest Minnesota State University will be closed (or Classes only will be canceled, or Delayed opening), Date and Time.** Information will include circumstances and duration of the emergency, activity and operations that will remain open, if any.
- Announcements will be made on the following radio stations:
 - Marshall - KMHL, KKCK, KARZ, KARL
 - Minneapolis/St. Paul – WCCO
 - Sioux Falls – KSOO
- Management will make every effort to provide local media with emergency local closure information for broadcast purposes in advance of the class starting times and/or shift starting time(s) normally observed by off duty personnel.
- Notification of closing to employees on-duty and students on-campus: The Provost or appropriate Vice President will inform his/her department heads who will inform subordinate employees of the emergency at the time of closing or delayed opening. All employees who are deaf or hard of hearing will receive notification, if at work, by the supervisor or designated backup staff. If an emergency is called after work hours, employees who are deaf or hard of hearing will receive notification at home from their supervisor or designee. The supervisor or designee may use the Minnesota Relay Service (1-800-627-3529) to contact the employee using the TTY. Students will be notified through appropriate student support services and academic offices. The Director of Communications & Marketing will coordinate any general announcements on campus.

- Cancellation of Non-Academic Activities – Notification of the cancellation of non-academic activities will be made by the director of the activity utilizing media and/or other appropriate means.

7. Management Responsibility

Management will inform employees and students of this procedure by the following methods:

- a. This policy/procedure will be permanently posted on all bulletin boards and on the SMSU Policy and Procedure Web site.
- b. Each supervisor/administrator shall route a copy of this procedure to each employee, and describe the policy/procedure to employees during staff meetings and/or employee departmental briefings. Employees are encouraged to consult with their supervisors or the Human Resources Office regarding any special needs and/or arrangements.
- c. A copy of this policy/procedure will be provided to the local representatives of each bargaining unit, by the Office of Human Resources.
- d. Copies will be provided to appropriate student services offices, residence hall RAs and staff, clubs and organizations, etc.
- e. The Director of Disability Resources will annually give students who are registered with the Disability Services office a copy of this procedure and encourage them to consult with the Director or the Chief Student Affairs Officer regarding any special needs and/or arrangements. Because of the difficulty in identifying and locating, on a class by class basis all students with disabilities, it will be the responsibility of those students to identify themselves and plan, where necessary, proper evacuation methods. To assist these students, informational training sessions covering evacuation methods will also be held periodically for faculty and staff.
- f. Copies will be provided to each employee designated as "essential" for purposes of closing due to inclement weather or other emergencies.
- g. Each department of supervisory area employing a person with a disability would work with the University Public Safety to develop an evacuation plan (including an alternate plan), specific to the needs and requirements of the employee. This will include training of co-workers to assist with the evacuation of the employee, if necessary, and participation of the employee and those co-workers in evacuation drills.

8. Work Responsibilities When the University is Closed or Delayed in Opening

When the University is closed due to an emergency which threatens the health and safety of individuals, employees not designated "essential" may be excused from duty with full pay. With regard to such closure, the following additional guidelines will prevail:

- a. When a campus is closed, university employees are excused from work with pay. A campus closure applies to all employees without regard to labor contract. Essential employees who are not excused from work will be paid at their regular rate of pay.
- b. Employees who report for work and are then sent home shall not be enriched through additional compensation,

including compensatory time, or increased benefits as a result of an emergency.

- c. Employees who are required to remain at work shall not be paid for more than their regularly scheduled hours or the actual number of hours worked.
- d. Employees on advance scheduled sick or vacation leave shall not have such leave time restored to their balances unless they cancel their leave and report to work.
- e. Employees on any approved leave without pay shall not be paid for any emergency leave time.
- f. Employees who call in, on the day of the emergency prior to the declaration of the emergency, for vacation time, compensatory time or leave without pay will be credited with emergency leave from the point of the declaration of the emergency to the end of the scheduled shift, if the University ceases operations during their regular shift.
- g. Employee uniform time reports should indicate the number of emergency hours utilized in the remarks section on their uniform time report.
- h. An employee's absence with pay for an emergency shall not exceed 16 hours during that emergency unless the President has authorized a longer period.

must get approval from the Provost or appropriate Vice President prior to any action.

Fire Emergencies

In case of a fire, the Marshall Fire Department and University Public Safety will be responsible for evacuating people within the buildings. When the fire alarms sound, follow these procedures:

- a. Immediately evacuate via the nearest emergency exit. Do not use elevators.
- b. Close all doors.
- c. Evacuation team members will assist with evacuation and ensure that all individuals in their assigned area have safely evacuated. Individuals with disabilities who require assistance in evacuating shall go to the closest stairwell. They should tell a faculty or staff member, co-worker or student who is exiting the building to immediately report the location of the individual inside the building to the Director of University Public Safety or his/her representative or the Fire Department representative on the scene.
- d. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing are notified of the evacuation by an individual from their work unit or the evacuation team.

Weather Emergencies

1. Assessment of Winter Weather Conditions

Closing of the University or cancellation of classes or activities may be implemented following assessment of four specific conditions. The combination of any two or more of these conditions will warrant serious consideration.

- Temperature -- actual temperature of 0 degrees or below with consideration given to wind chill temperature.
- Wind velocity -- in excess of 20 m.p.h.
- Precipitation -- predicted or actual ice, snow, rain or combination in excess of two inches over a 24 hour period.
- Conditions of the road as advised by the MN State Highway Department. Ice or snow packed roads, or significant cumulative snow cover will impact the assessment of overall conditions.

The Director of University Public Safety will be responsible for monitoring weather conditions and contacting the Marshall Department of Public Safety and the local area Minnesota Highway Patrol for public safety information weather alerts. The Director will keep appropriate University officials apprised of weather status.

2. Inclement Weather When the University Is Not Closed

Due to the personal circumstances during inclement weather when the University is not closed, such as place of residence, employees may find it necessary to leave work early even though the University has not been closed. Further, because of place of residence, employees might be unable to get to work even though the University is open. In such cases, but only with prior supervisory approval, annual leave, adjusted work schedule, compensatory time, or leave without pay may be granted. Cancellation of classes does not excuse employees from work. In such circumstances when the University is not closed, if a manager should wish to consider limiting hours of operation because of severe weather, that manager

If you see the fire and no alarm has been sounded, call 9911 or University Public Safety immediately at 7252. University Public Safety will set off the alarm and contact the Fire Department.

SMSU asks for everyone's help if or when a building needs to be evacuated. Students, faculty and/or staff who anticipate they could have a problem knowing when or how they should evacuate a building, should alert their supervisor, the Chief Student Affairs Officer or Director of Physical Medicine about their needs.

Severe Weather

Severe weather reported in the area will be reported to the University by the Marshall Police Department via telephone and/or radio to the University Public Safety Office. The University Public Safety Office will dispatch information to all administrative offices.

When the decision has been made by the President or his/her designee to relocate to safe areas, a message will be sent to the campus community by E-mail to communicate that decision.

When the relocation order has been given, the Director of University Public Safety and evacuation team will:

- a. Assist all individuals in moving away from windows and into assigned safe areas.
- b. Remind individuals designated to assist employees and students with mobility impairments or who are deaf and hard of hearing to assist in relocating to the assigned safe stairwell areas.

When the weather threat has passed, the Director of University Public Safety will issue the "all clear" and normal operations may resume.

Bomb Threats

When the decision has been made by the President to evacuate the building due to a bomb threat, the following individuals will be notified:

- Director of Physical Plant
- Provost/Vice Presidents
- Director of Communications & Marketing
- Director of University Public Safety

Each of the above will be responsible for specific notification department heads/supervisors, the University scheduling Office and the University Switchboard. Each department head will develop a network among employees to effectively notify individuals.

Notification of campus evacuation to employees on-duty and students on-campus will be made as follows: The Provost or appropriate vice president will inform his/her department heads who will inform subordinate employees of the emergency evacuation. Students will be notified through appropriate student support services and academic offices. The Director of Communications & Marketing will coordinate any general announcements on campus.

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing will be assisted by their supervisor or designated back up staff. Individuals who have a mobility impairment will be accompanied by two designated assistants or by their supervisor and should use the elevators if it is safe to do so.

Other Emergencies

The President or his/her designee will assess the nature and extent of the emergency, determine if the University offices and services should remain open or be closed and notify the appropriate personnel.