

Policy

Contact: Vice President for Finance and Administration

Sources: [SDBOR Policy 4.1.11](#)

NORTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY

Policies and Guidelines

SUBJECT: Emergency Campus Closure

NUMBER: 6.8

1. Purpose

This policy implements SDBOR Policy 4.1.11 and sets forth the guidelines for canceling classes or closing the University due to emergencies, including inclement weather.

2. Definitions

- a. Emergency: any natural, nuclear, man-made or war-related disaster; any health-related catastrophe; or any phenomenon which disrupts SDBOR or University facilities or operations as set forth in the University Emergency Management Plan.
- b. Essential Personnel: someone who is required to report to work or remain on duty during an emergency or closure. These employees perform functions that must continue even when operations are disrupted. They may be designated at the time of the emergency.

Examples include:

- Safety/security personnel
- Maintenance/custodial/facilities staff
- Supervisory roles
- IT or operations staff critical to continuity
- Employees assigned by leadership due to the nature of the emergency

- c. Non-Essential Personnel: someone who is *not* required to report to work or remain on-site during an emergency or closure. Their duties can be paused, postponed, or performed remotely without putting operations or safety at risk. Designation is typically made by leadership based on the situation.

Examples include:

- Staff who do not support immediate safety, care, or operational continuity
- Employees whose work can wait or be done later
- Employees sent home or told not to report during closures

- d. Non-Instructional Staff: administrative staff members, CSA staff members who are not assigned to classroom or instructional laboratory support activities, and faculty members whose primary responsibilities are for research or service.

3. Policy

The University remains open in all but the most extreme circumstances. Unless an emergency closing is announced, all employees including faculty are expected to report to work. During inclement weather, all employees are urged to use their own discretion in deciding whether they can safely commute to work.

University emergency closings pursuant to the University Emergency Management Plan are subject to the requirements of this policy, and the University Emergency Management Plan procedures will be followed, as applicable.

a. Closing the Campus

- i. The decision to close the University campus for an emergency, including inclement weather, will be made by the University President or, in their absence, the presiding University officer, in consultation with the Provost and Vice President for Finance and Administration, or designee.
- ii. At off-campus centers the decision to close the center will be made by the on-site director, if applicable, in consultation with the Provost, or designee, who will inform the University President of the decision to close.
- iii. Emergency closings will be continuously re-evaluated during the day so regular business can resume as soon as possible. Updates will be posted to the university web site and notifications will be sent to employees and students through the emergency alert system. The media and local radio stations will be used to provide updates to the general public.
- iv. Campus closings may occur for reasons articulated in SDBOR Policy 4.1.11, including emergencies where law enforcement prohibits travel; the facility is damaged or destroyed due to an emergency; an emergency has made an office or function non-essential; law enforcement, Emergency Management Team, or the Department of Public Safety deems the campus a danger and orders evacuation; or inclement weather jeopardizes individual safety and it is determined too dangerous to allow commuting to campus.

b. Class Cancellation

- i. The decision to cancel classes or transition to remote learning due to an emergency, including inclement weather, will be made by the University President or, in their absence, the presiding officer, in consultation with the University Provost and the Vice President for Finance and Administration, their successors, or designees.
- ii. The University campus may remain open when classes are cancelled or delivered remotely. When the decision has been made to cancel classes, all non-instructional staff are expected to report to work, but employees are urged to use their discretion in deciding whether they can safely commute to work.

Information regarding reporting to work will be included in the announcement sent to employees and students through the emergency alert system.

- iii. At off-campus centers, the decision to cancel classes will be made by the on-site director or presiding University officer, in consultation with the University Provost, or designee. The Provost will notify the University President of the decision to cancel classes.
- iv. Emergency class cancellations should be continuously re-evaluated during the day so regular business can resume as soon as possible. Updates will be posted to the university web site and notifications will be sent to employees and students through the emergency alert system. The media and local radio stations will be used to provide updates to the general public.
- c. Communication of Campus Closing or Class Cancellations
 - i. The University President, or designee, shall ensure that the SDBOR Executive Director or presiding officer is notified of the intent to close a campus or cancel classes and the time and duration of the event.
 - ii. The emergency alert system will be used to notify employees and students of a closing or class cancellation. Notification will be provided based on the options selected by the employee at the time they register in the emergency notification system. The notification will also be posted on the university website.
- d. Employee Compensation
 - i. When an emergency closing, including due to inclement weather, has not been declared, employees who do not report to work or wish to leave early have the option of taking annual leave, accrued compensatory time, leave without pay, or adjusting the work week. Supervisory approval is required for any of the options. Employees who feel they cannot safely reach the worksite shall take appropriate action to notify their supervisor that they will be absent from work.
 - ii. In the event the offices at the University campus are closed due to an emergency, including inclement weather, the following provisions apply:
 - 1. Non-essential, leave-accruing personnel will be granted paid administrative leave. Non-leave accruing temporary employees and students do not qualify for administrative leave.
 - 2. Essential personnel must report to work at prearranged worksites, unless otherwise instructed. Those overtime eligible employees that are required to work will receive payment for the administrative leave hours (at a straight rate) plus the hours they were required to work.
 - 3. If an overtime exempt employee is designated as essential and reports to work, they will not get “extra” hours and should not enter administrative leave.
 - 4. If an employee is considered essential and does not report to work as required, appropriate leave and/or DOC pay should be used for that absence.

- iii. Administrative leave may be granted when a worksite is closed where access is not controlled by the University. However, if employees have access to the department, building, and/or facilities then no administrative leave will be approved. The senior administrator at that worksite must notify the University President and the HR Department of such closings.
- iv. If an employee has a remote work agreement and their primary work location is not disrupted by the event, they will not receive administrative leave since their work location is still available. If an employee has an approved remote work assignment to work from home and the campus is closed, they would not be eligible for administrative leave since the campus is not their designated worksite and they can work at their remote worksite.
- v. For employees working overnight shifts, if the University is closed on the date in which an employee's shift starts, the employee will record administrative leave for the entire regularly scheduled shift.
- vi. When the University is closed while an employee is already working their scheduled shift on site, administrative leave will be prorated for the remainder of the shift and follow the essential employee rules as applicable. If the employee is not deemed essential, they must leave the work location upon the announcement of the administrative closure.
- vii. If paid administrative leave is not approved and an employee is unable to reach work or wants to leave the office early due to an emergency, the employee may do so with the approval of the supervisor. Hourly employees must use annual leave, leave without pay, or adjust work hours during the remainder of the work week with the approval of the supervisor.
- viii. Administrative leave is prorated based upon % time and must be recorded in accordance with the employee's regularly scheduled hours. Employees will not receive administrative leave pay in excess of the scheduled shift or more than 40 hours per week.
- ix. If an employee has requested leave in advance of the notification of an emergency administrative leave, the employee will not be allowed to modify or delete their leave request unless they work as an essential employee or the emergency event prevented them from attending or participating in their planned leave activity.
- x. Administrative leave will be granted only for the number of hours the University campus was administratively closed, not to exceed the number of hours for which the employee was scheduled to work.
- xi. If a part-time employee qualifies for leave, but their schedule varies from month to month, administrative leave is computed based on an average of the prior three months' hours worked to determine the number of hours of administrative leave to apply.
- xii. Leave accruing employees with hire dates on the date of office administrative closings will be paid administrative leave.
- xiii. Salaried employees who were absent for any period must record the number of hours of paid administrative leave.

- xiv. Overtime eligible employees may not voluntarily choose to work remotely during a University closure.

4. Procedures

- a. The University President or, in their absence, the presiding officer, in consultation with the University Provost the Vice President for Finance and Administration, the Director of Facilities, their successors, or designees will determine based on the emergency whether to cancel classes or transition to remote learning, and if the campus should be closed or remain open.
- b. The University President, or in their absence, the presiding officer, will notify the Executive Director of the Board of Regents.
- c. The Director of Marketing and Communications, successor, or designee, is responsible for posting campus closure and class cancellation announcements on social media and the campus website.
- d. The Vice President for Finance and Administration is responsible for announcing campus closure and class cancellation announcements to local radio stations and TV stations. Such announcements shall reference the start time and date of the closing or class cancellations and the duration.
- e. The Director of Human Resources or in their absence, the Dean of Students will send notification through the emergency alert system.

5. Responsible Administrator

The Vice President for Finance and Administration, successor, or designee, is responsible for annual and ad hoc review of this policy. The University President is responsible for approval of this policy.

6. Source History:

10/20/2025 - Approved by Executive Leadership Team