

CATASTROPHIC EVENTS AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS

I. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance for a safe and efficient response to disruptive events that impact Western Dakota Technical College's (WDTC's) faculty, staff, and students. Crisis and emergency management preparation is an essential function for WDTC. The College will mitigate the impact of crisis situations and operational disruptions on its campus community through implementing policies and procedures that provide for continuity of operations in cases of a catastrophic event.

II. General Statement of Policy

The policy of the College is to maintain and adhere to specific policies and procedures regarding crisis situations, catastrophic events, and program discontinuances in order to minimize the length of time that students' educational activities are disrupted and, when applicable, minimize the length of time that students, faculty, and staff are displaced.

A. To help mitigate the impact of an emergency on College operations –

1. The College maintains an Emergency Plan that is reviewed and updated at least annually by the Safety Committee and approved by Cabinet.
2. The College leverages a cloud hosted student information system and a learning management system to minimize the likelihood of service interruption and data loss.
3. The College collaborates with local law enforcement, county emergency response, and state departments to guide the college during a catastrophic event.

B. The following WDTC policies are intended to help mitigate the impact of a catastrophic event on College operations –

- Policy 4310 – Student Records Retention
- Policy 6045 – Security of Protected Information
- Policy 6040 – Information Security Program
- Policy 4210 – Refunds
- Policy 5020 – Campus Safety

C. In the event of a Western Dakota Technical College campus closure –

1. The College will comply with policy FDCR.B.10.010 from the Higher Learning Commission.

2. WDTC will provide equitable treatment of students by ensuring they are able to complete the educational program in which they are enrolled within a reasonable period of time. WDTC will also provide prompt notification of additional changes to students, if any. In the unlikely event that WDTC cannot deliver the instruction for which students have enrolled, the College commits to one or more of the following courses of action:

- Providing a reasonable alternative for delivering instruction and/or services for which students have paid.
- Providing assistance for transferring earned credits to other institutions.
- Providing reasonable financial refund for the education students did not receive.

WDTC students will be notified by college administration and then counseled about their options.

3. The South Dakota Board of Technical Education will ensure all permanent records of current and former students will be maintained and available. The Board may be contacted at 800 Governors Drive, Pierre, South Dakota 57501.

D. In the event of a program closure WDTC Policy 3095 – Program Closure will be implemented.

III. Definitions - None

IV. Reporting Procedures – None

V. Dissemination of Policy and Training

A. This policy shall appear on the WDTC website on the policy page.

Legal References: None

Board Approved 2/9/2022; Committee Reviewed 3/7/2023; Committee Reviewed 2/19/2025