

5.9 Smudging and Pipe Ceremonies Policy and Procedure

Purpose

Central Lakes College is committed to diversity, inclusion, and creating an open and respectful campus climate for all. The College recognizes tobacco, sage, sweet grass, and cedar as traditional American Indian medicines and essential elements of purification and sacred ceremony. This Policy and Procedure are designed to guide the College community in engaging with these traditions while respecting the rights and perspectives of all individuals on campus.

Students, faculty, staff, elders, and cultural teachers all of whom are members of an American Indian Tribe or other cultural/religious groups, are free to use substances including but not limited to tobacco, sage, sweet grass, cedar and incense to conduct individual or group traditional practices including, but not limited to, Opening/Closing prayers, Individual or Group Smudging, Feasts, Pipe Ceremonies, Pow Wows, and Drumming/Singing.

Authority

This Procedure is established in accordance with Minnesota's Clean Air Act (Minnesota Statutes, 1997, sections 144.4167 and 144.4165) and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA).

Responsibility

Support for diversity and this Procedure is a shared responsibility at all levels of the College. The responsibility for implementing this Procedure is assigned to the Vice President of Administrative Services.

Procedure

Central Lakes College is committed to creating an inclusive, open, and respectful campus climate for our diverse community members and guests. There are many types of ceremonies, including individual ones as part of engagement with Indigenous pedagogies in the classroom and community engagement ceremonies. Notification requirements to the Physical Plant Director vary and depend on the size of the space where tobacco, sage, sweet grass, or cedar is used. It is assumed that very small quantities are used for individual offices or workstations on a process, and pre-approved locations and notifications are provided below.

Locations and Notifications

Exemption to Pre-approved Event Spaces: The following indoor event spaces have been pre-evaluated and are pre-approved for smudging or pipe ceremonies, given three (3) business days' notice to the Vice President of Administrative Services:

Brainerd Campus	Staples Campus	Staples West Campus
- Large Auditorium Classroom: Room E354 - Humphrey Center: Room E356 - Gymnasium: Room E122 - Multi-Purpose Room: Room E101 - Eating Commons: Room C171 - Chalberg Theatre: Room E460 - Class Room E208 - Class Room E203 - The Bridge	- Assembly Room: Room C168 - Commons Area: A101	Conference Room 138

To conduct smudging or pipe ceremonies in these locations, the event sponsors shall:

- Reserve the event space through the Facilities Coordinators Office (218) 855-8052.
- Specify in the event advertising and publicity that the event will include the intention to use tobacco, sage, sweet grass, or cedar.

The Facilities Coordinator will notify the Campus community via email at least 24 hours in advance of the event, including the campus, room number, and time.

Outdoor Spaces:

Smudging/pipe ceremonies are permitted in all outdoor spaces on campus. Events hosted on campus grounds must be registered and approved through the Facilities Coordinator, including notification that the event may involve the use of tobacco, sage, sweet grass, or cedar.

Individual Office and Work Spaces:

An American Indian member of the College community or other cultural/religious groups may conduct smudging in an individual office or work space without prior approval, provided they:

- Has Office and Work Space pre-approved through the Facilities Division, and signage identifying the room as "Smudging Approved Office". Approval from the Facilities Division, including signage, is obtained by submitting a Facilities work order.
- Make sure doors are closed.
- Notifies occupants of neighboring offices and classrooms.
- Forward email to the Dean of Students, Equity and Inclusion, and the Physical Plant Director for situational awareness.

Exemptions to Pre-approved Locations:

Such as classrooms and meeting rooms, an American Indian member of the CLC community or other cultural/religious groups who plans to conduct smudging or pipe ceremony in a classroom or meeting room shall:

- Ensure the room is reserved through the Facilities Coordinator.
- Inform participants/meeting attendees of the intention to use tobacco, sage, sweetgrass, and/or cedar in the space.
- Post notices on the door(s).
- Make sure door(s) are closed.
- Provide notice to neighboring classrooms and other spaces.
- Provide the Vice President of Administrative Services, Physical Plant Director, the Director of Safety, and the Director of Security, with six (6) business days' notice.

Upon receiving notice, the Physical Plant Director, the Director of Safety, and the Director of Security shall:

- Evaluate the fire and ventilation systems in the requested space.
- Inform Campus Security and other relevant staff.

In addition, if the smudging or pipe ceremony is part of an official course presentation:

- The date of the ceremony must be indicated in the syllabus, distributed at the beginning of the semester, or
- If smudging or a pipe ceremony is added to the course after the start of the term, students must receive at least 2 weeks' advance notice of the event.

- In either case, students who claim physical sensitivities to smoke or scent will be allowed to make alternate arrangements with the instructor for course participation.

Other spaces:

All other spaces must be evaluated for approval by the Physical Plant Director at least 6 business days in advance of the event.

Other Considerations:

Facilities will work with the organizers to ensure that alarm issues do not disrupt the event; however, some building occupants may detect smoke or odor from the lit tobacco, sage, sweet grass, and cedar.

Technical support for smudging ceremonies is a core facilities service; no financial charges will apply during normal building hours. However, large gatherings during evening or weekend hours may require additional staffing, which would be charged back to the organizing group, as is the case with other campus events. The Vice President of Administrative Services will determine whether such additional charges will apply.

If an alarm sounds during a ceremony, treat it as a real fire alarm and take appropriate action. Maintenance will clear the issue as soon as possible. The event manager will be accountable for the people attending and responsible for deciding whether to wait to return to the building or allow participants to leave and cancel the remainder of the event. Maintenance will be responsible for calling the event manager with updates.

Review

This Procedure shall be reviewed every five (5) years or as needed.

Date of Implementation/Presidential Approval: 3/4/2015

Date of last revision: 7/31/2025