

Rocky Mountain College Campus Smudging Procedure

Purpose

Rocky Mountain College (RMC) is committed to equity and inclusion and we pursue and embrace all forms of diversity throughout all operations. In support of Indigenous students, RMC will provide a pathway for participation in the spiritual practice of smudging in designated spaces on campus.

In accordance with the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act, RMC has developed smudging procedures for students, faculty and staff while on campus. In addition, RMC recognizes and supports Indigenous students engaging in these practices within the privacy of their residence hall rooms, with guidelines in place.

Definition

Smudging is the practice of cleansing or purifying oneself, space, or objects through producing sacred smoke by burning a small amount of sacred or medicinal plant medicines. This tradition is common and vital to many Indigenous peoples. Many Native American medicines participate in smudging as a spiritual and religious practice. RMC recognizes the use of sage, cedar and sweet grass. Students who wish to use plants other than these must discuss the medicines to be used during the approval process. Typically the smoke associated with smudging lasts for a brief duration of time.

Rocky Mountain College is a smoke free campus and has made an exception to the policy, with an advanced approval by the Vice President for Student Life or designee.

Per RMC Student Handbook, Tobacco-Free Policy: NUMBER: A-001-01-0013

H. Exceptions: The following activities may be conducted as exceptions to the policy subject to advance approval as indicated. 1. Specific activities used in connection with the practice of cultural activities by American Indians that are in accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 U.S.C. sections 1996 and 1996a allow for the use of ceremonial tobacco. 2. Specific activities used in connection with the practice of recognized religious organizations allow for the use of ceremonial tobacco. 3. All religious and ceremonial use exceptions must be approved in advance by the Vice President for Student Life or designee.

Procedures

RMC recognizes the cultural importance of smudging among Indigenous/Native American students. All smudging activities on campus must be coordinated and approved through the Native American Outreach Office. Indigenous/Native American students, staff, faculty and guests who would like to engage in smudging in designated campus spaces, must first:

1. Complete and submit a Smudging Exemption Form to the Native American Outreach (NAO) office.
 - a. Form available online at <https://form.jotform.com/230316383231042>

2. Following receipt of the Smudging Exemption Form, the NAO staff will work in partnership with the Office of Residence Life (if in campus housing) and Campus Safety as needed to review and determine approval of the request.
 - i. If approved:
 1. The NAO will provide the applicant with a fire extinguisher, list of campus fire extinguisher locations, and *Approved Smudging in Process* sign.
 2. The approved location will have adequate ventilation (for example: windows that open, operable kitchen hoods or other means of ventilation, as applicable) to ensure that smoke generated does not activate the smoke detector/fire alarm. Ceremonial locations shall be periodically inspected by Facilities Services to ensure appropriate ventilation, smoke alarms and fire extinguishers are available and in working condition.
 3. The applicant will smudge according to the following expectations:
 - a. In order to reduce the number of inquiries regarding the smell of smoke, the applicant will post the provided *Approved Smudging in Process* sign on the door of the space where smudging is taking place.
 - b. The applicant will smudge within the approved location which the individual and their roommate/officemate(s) have mutually agreed upon (if shared space).
 - c. Smoke detectors and fire alarms are to never be disabled.
 - d. The applicant will provide all the materials needed, in addition to a sufficiently large, non-combustible container (shell, metal, ceramic, etc). No matches are allowed, a lighter must be used. The smudging medicinal plants (sage, sweetgrass or cedar) must stay within the container throughout.
 - e. Following the smudging, the individual is responsible for extinguishing and disposing of the burnt remains in a manner consistent with both their spiritual traditions and RMC safety policies and expectations.
 - ii. If approved and live on campus (to include above items):
 1. The Office of Residence Life will send an email notifying assigned roommate(s) that smudging will take place on the approved date/time/location.
 2. The applicant will notify the Office of Residence Life when smudging begins and ends by emailing housing@rocky.edu.
 - iii. If denied, the applicant will be notified by NAO and discuss denial reasons and options for reapplication.

Failure to Follow Procedure

Failure to follow the procedures outlined by RMC could result in suspension or termination of the applicant's approval to engage in ceremonial smudging on-campus.