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Version No.: 1	Creation Date: December 14, 2023	Version Date: December 14, 2023	Review Date: December 14, 2024
Authority: Vice President Administration and Finance		Responsibility: Health, Safety, and Environment Manager	

1. Background

- 1.1. UPEI is committed to reconciliation and a lasting relationship with Indigenous communities based on mutual respect and collaboration. Smudging and Sacred fires are Indigenous ceremonial practices and, as outlined in Section 5.7 of the Smoke-Free Campus Policy, these practices are accepted on campus.
- 1.2. Smudging is an Indigenous cultural practice and involves the burning of substances such as sweetgrass, cedar, and sage. The practice is based on traditional beliefs that the smoke produced is a means of purification and creates a positive mindset for those involved in an activity or event.
- 1.3. Sacred fires are small fires used for ceremonies and important events. They are lit at the beginning of significant events, kept burning under close supervision of a Firekeeper and allowed to burn out naturally at the close of the event. They represent a spiritual doorway to honour ancestors, and offerings of sacred medicines are fed to the fire by participants as a part of the ceremony.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Attendant:** a person designated by their community or by the Firekeeper as a helper for the Firekeeper; they will have traditional teachings and will balance the fire.
- 2.2. **Combustible Materials:** any fibre, construction, dust, or liquid that in their condition and under expected circumstances will ignite or add appreciable heat to a fire; explode; or a liquid which has a flash point at or above 37.8°C and below 93.3°C.
- 2.3. **CSA approved:** a product labelled with the CSA certification mark.
- 2.4. **Firekeeper:** a person designated by their community who has been given the responsibility of starting, maintaining, and closing fires for ceremonial purposes.

3. Smudging Ceremonies

3.1. Locations

3.1.1. Pre-approved spaces

Smudging in the following areas is approved without prior permission. Doors, if applicable, are to remain closed to confine the smudge to within the room. Pre-approved rooms include:

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- Dalton Hall, Mawi’omi Centre
- Chaplaincy Centre, Room 100
- Kelley Memorial Building, Rooms 210, 211, 234, 236, 237
- SDU Main Building, Rooms 114, 115, 116, 117
- Memorial Hall, Rooms 308 and 417
- Atlantic Veterinary College, Rooms 286 and 287

3.1.2. Other Spaces

All other areas not included in Section 3.1.1 require approval as described in Section 3.2.

- ### 3.1.3. Locations that have smoke detectors are not recommended for smudging. Areas that do not have smoke detectors are suitable for smudging provided the area is equipped with a sprinkler system. Facilities Management will evaluate this for the requested location as part of the approval process.

3.2. Smudging Approval Request Procedure:

- ### 3.2.1. If a smudging is to be held outside of the approved locations listed in Section 3.1.1, a member of faculty or staff can submit their request through the Facilities Management Work Order system. The request must be made in advance (five business days preferred). Any concerns related to the proposed location will be discussed between Facilities Management and the requestor via phone or email at this time.
- ### 3.2.2. Facilities Management will advise the appropriate area leader (i.e., Dean, Chair, Director, Manager, etc.) and the Health, Safety, and Environment Department of the planned smudging ceremony location as soon as it is approved. Notification will include the date, time, and length of the ceremony.
- ### 3.2.3. The area leader must advise the building occupants of the smudging. Please see sample email to copy and paste to building occupants in Appendix A.
- ### 3.2.4. While smudging does not typically pose a health risk, individuals impacted by it, due to a health condition, need to notify their area leader (i.e., Dean, Chair, Director, or Manager).
- ### 3.2.5. The organizer of the smudging ceremony will ensure that required signage, provided in Appendix B, is posted on the room door where the smudging is taking place and indicate

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duration of smudge. The signage must remain posted for the duration of the ceremony and removed once the smudge dissipates.

- 3.2.6. Every effort will be made by the person(s) organizing the ceremony to confine the smudge to the immediate area. Where possible, windows will be opened to ventilate during the smudge, and closed when finished. The door will remain closed until the smudge dissipates.

4. Conduct of Sacred Fire Ceremonies

4.1. Location

Currently, sacred fires are only permitted to take place uncovered in the central quad on the gravel area between the Kelley Memorial Building and the W.A. Murphy Student Centre, subject to approval of the request as outlined in Section 4.2.1.

4.2. Sacred Fire Approval Request Procedure

- 4.2.1. If a sacred fire is to be held on campus, a member of faculty or staff can submit their request through the Facilities Management Work Order system. The request must be sent in advance (five business days preferred) with the following details:
- a. Date and approximate time of the sacred fire
 - b. Location
 - c. Who will be conducting the ceremonial practice (firekeeper/attendant(s) full name and phone number)

Any concerns related to the ceremony will be discussed between Facilities Management and the requestor via phone or email at this time.

- 4.2.2. Facilities Management will advise the Health, Safety and Environment Department, for their awareness, of the planned sacred fire ceremony as soon as it is approved. Notification will include the date, time, and length of the ceremony.
- 4.2.3. Facilities Management will notify Marketing and Communications of the approved fire in order to communicate to the campus community of the potential smell of smoke. Notification will include the date, time, and length of the ceremony.

4.3. Sacred Fire Ceremony Guidelines

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- 4.3.1. The fire must be located at least 7.62 meters (25 ft.) away from any structure or combustible material.
- 4.3.2. The fire is to be ignited, attended, and supervised at all times by the designated Firekeeper and at least one attendant.
- 4.3.3. Fires must be contained within a CSA approved fireplace and not exceed 0.5 metres in diameter and 0.5 metres in height. The size of the fireplace must not exceed 0.9 metres in diameter and 0.6 metres in height.
- 4.3.4. A fire shall not be ignited in windy conditions. An existing fire will be extinguished by the Firekeeper if winds or other conditions cause smoke to be a danger or disturbance to occupants or others in the outdoor spaces or on adjacent properties.
- 4.3.5. Permitted burning materials include clean wood and brush, traditional medicines, and any materials approved by the Firekeeper. No person shall use gasoline or highly volatile material for starting fires (Section 25.6 *PEI Occupational Health and Safety Act General Regulations*). Garbage and other refuse is not to be placed in the fireplace and is not to be burnt.
- 4.3.6. Appropriate fire extinguishing equipment must be on-site while burning is taking place and used in case of emergency. Training in the use of this equipment is essential to maintaining a safe fire. At least one participant in the ceremony must hold valid training in fire extinguisher use. Contact the Health, Safety, and Environment Department (902-566-0901, HSE@upei.ca) for more training information.
- 4.3.7. The Firekeeper and attendant(s) will remove any loose vegetation or combustible materials within 1 metre around the burn area. Participants and visitors will keep 1 metre away from the fire at all times, unless approved by the Firekeeper to approach the fire for ceremonial or teaching purposes.
- 4.3.8. If smoke becomes overwhelming, the Firekeeper will direct people to exit the area and will attempt to disperse the smoke.
- 4.3.9. In the event of an emergency, the Firekeeper and attendant(s) will direct anyone within the area to exit in an orderly fashion and will quench the fire. The Firekeeper or

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attendant(s) must have immediate access to a cell phone and call 911 if the fire begins to spread.

4.3.10. At the conclusion of the fire, the Firekeeper or attendant must ensure all smouldering embers are completely extinguished prior to leaving the site. The Firekeeper will properly close and secure the fireplace and surrounding area at the closure of a fire.

4.3.11. The Firekeeper or attendant will notify UPEI Security (902-566-0384) that the ceremony has concluded and request that any remaining items at the location (e.g. fire extinguishers, markers, signs) be retrieved by Facilities Management.

4.3.12. In the interest of public safety, Facilities Management and the Charlottetown Fire Department reserve the right to temporarily suspend approval for burnings, should conditions determined by GPEI burn ban or Facilities Management and/or the Chief Fire Official warrant such action.

5. Review

5.1. This procedure will be reviewed annually, or earlier, if necessary, by the Health, Safety, and Environment Manager with input from the UPEI Indigenous community.

6. References

- 6.1. Resources for Smudging and Sacred Fire: <https://www.trentu.ca/fph/cultural-support/student-employee-resources>
- 6.2. Outdoor Fire Places & Open Fires, City of Charlottetown: https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_10500298/File/OUTDOOR-FIRE-PLACES.pdf
- 6.3. Recreational Campfires, Government of Prince Edward Island, Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/environment-energy-and-climate-action/recreational-campfires>
- 6.4. Categories of Outdoor Fires, Government of Prince Edward Island, Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/environment-energy-and-climate-action/categories-of-outdoor-fires>
- 6.5. UPEI Smoke-Free Campus Policy: https://files.upei.ca/policy/smoke_free_campus_policy_admhrdohs0007r2.pdf

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- 6.6. Occupational Health and Safety Act General Regulations, Government of Prince Edward Island: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/legislation/o1-01g-occupational_health_and_safety_act_general_regulations.pdf

Appendix A

UPEI Smudging Guidelines email from area leader to building occupants to inform that smudging will occur:

Please be advised that smudging will occur in your building from *{insert date and time frame}* in room(s) *{insert room number(s)}*.

- Signage will be posted on the room door where the smudging is taking place and indicate duration of smudge. The signage will remain posted for the duration of the ceremony and removed once the smudge dissipates.
- The room door will remain closed until the smudge dissipates.

For more information, please see the [UPEI Smudging Guidelines](#).

Appendix B

Please post the signage below on the door(s) where smudging will occur. The signage must remain posted for the duration of the ceremony and can be removed once the smudge dissipates.

