UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Environmental Health and Safety

Open Flame Ceremony Procedure

November 2026

UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Environmental Health and Safety

Open Flame Ceremony Procedure

Table of Contents

I. General

II. Restrictions

III. Permit Request

Request Ceremony Event

Approval or Denial Process

IV. Ceremony Procedure

V. Candles, Incense, and Open Flame Safety Requirements

Disposal of Candles, Incense, and Open Flame Devices

VI. Emergency Information

VII. Recordkeeping

Appendix

Appendix A – Open Flame Ceremony Permit

UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

Environmental Health and Safety

Open Flame Ceremony Procedure

I. GENERAL

The University recognizes that students, faculty, and staff engage in a variety of ceremonies. This procedure is to provide guidance to the University community engaging in these types of ceremonies.

Generally, the use of open flames (including those found in candles), cigarettes, hookah, and incense are not allowed in university-owned residence halls, apartments, and houses. However, candles, incense, and open-flame devices may be used subject to certain restrictions (see Section II).

II. RESTRICTIONS

Upon prior written approval by Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), candles, incense, and/or open flame devices may be used during religious, cultural, or honorary events and ceremonies. Candles, incense, or open flames may be used in designated spaces (i.e. lounges) in university-owned residence halls, apartments, and houses. Designated space(s) will be identified on the approved permit. Plants used for a ceremony may include sage, sweetgrass, and cedar.

III. PERMIT REQUEST

Request Ceremony Event

To request an open flame ceremony type event, an Open Flame Ceremony Permit (Appendix A) must be completed and submitted to the EHS office a minimum of ten (10) days before the ceremony date.

Approval and Denial Process

EHS will review the permit to determine if the request will be approved or denied. The reviewing process will include, but is not limited to:

- Location of the ceremony;
- Type of candles, incense, or open flame device being used;
- Number of participants;
- Fire Alarm (smoke detection) System in the room and area;
- Ventilation system in the room and area;
- Exits and room setup;
- Health and/or medical concerns; and
- Name of contact at the relevant department (e.g. Housing) regarding the permit request.

Approval can be given by the Environmental Health and Safety Department or AVP of Facilities Management.

IV. **CEREMONY PROCEDURE**

Once an approved permit is obtained, the ceremony may proceed only on the date and time stated on the permit. A copy of the approved permit must be present, at the designated area, during the ceremony. The following requirements shall be followed during the ceremony:

- UNC Police Department shall be notified 30 minutes before the beginning of the ceremony.
- Section V, below (Candles, Incense, and Open Flame Safety Requirements), must be followed during the ceremony event.
- During the ceremony, an individual (who is not a participant in the event) shall be assigned to keep a fire watch and shall have a fire extinguisher present. The fire watch shall be present when the event begins and until all candles, incense, or open flames are extinguished and have stopped burning.
- Flames shall be immediately extinguished properly at the conclusion of the ceremony.
- Once the ceremony is complete and all items have stopped burning, the University Police Department shall be notified that the ceremony is finished.

Students, faculty, and staff may be held financially accountable for any damage to person or property that results from a violation of this procedure and disciplinary action may be taken against any person involved in such violation. Individuals who provide or contribute materials to burn or who ignite or attempt to ignite flammable materials, in addition to what is listed on the permit, will be considered in violation of this procedure and any such actions may violate state and city regulations.

V. **CANDLE, INCENSE, AND OPEN FLAME SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

If the permit is approved, the following requirements are required for candles, incense, or open-flame devices:

- No person under the age of 16 will be allowed to hold or light a candle, incense, or open flame (unless approved by Environmental Health and Safety).
- Candles, incense, or open flame devices must be under constant supervision and shall not be unattended while burning.
- Candles, incense, or open flame devices shall be lit only during the ceremony.
- Candles, incense, or open flame devices must not be placed on windowsills or other areas that are unstable or where they could come into contact with curtains or other hanging objects.
- Candles, incense, or open flame devices will not be permitted in areas where occupants are standing in aisles or exits.
- Readily combustible materials, including draperies, curtains, and papers, must be a minimum of three (3) feet away from any candle, incense, or open flame.
- Lighted candles must be placed in a non-combustible candle holder or container.
- No lit candle may be held without a holder or collar.
- Each candleholder shall have an upturned collar, 4 inches in diameter, to keep any hot wax from dripping onto a person’s hand, clothing, or the floor. The candle holder shall be made of noncombustible materials (not cardboard).
- Hand-held, lighted candles shall not be passed from one person to another.
- Candlesticks may not be used that exceed four (4) inches in height.
- Candles must be burned upright.
- Approved use of stick incense must be burned in such a manner that hot ashes do not contact any combustible material or cause damage to any surface upon which they fall.

- Candles, incense, or open flame devices must not be used in close proximity to active heat and smoke detectors or sprinkler heads in such a way that the heat or smoke might activate the devices.

Disposal of Candles, Incense, or Open Flame Devices

- Position the candlestick or open flame device in a non-combustible pan containing one-half inch of water. The pan must be large enough to catch the candle(s) if they fall.
- During the cooling process, place the pan on a table or desk completely clear of other materials and away from shelves and open windows.
- Place sage, cedar, and sweetgrass in a non-combustible container with an airtight lid.
- Once all candles, incense, and open flame devices are completely cooled, they shall be removed from the premises immediately after the ceremony.

VI. **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

In the case of an emergency, the University Police Department must be contacted immediately at 911 or (970) 351-2245.

In case of an uncontrolled fire, use a fire extinguisher if safe to do so. Otherwise, evacuate the building and contact the University Police Department.

VII. **RECORDKEEPING**

Completed Open Flame Ceremony Permit (Appendix A) shall be kept on file, in EHS Department for a minimum of one (1) year after the event completion date.

Open Flame Ceremony Permit

Requestor Name (Please Print):	Requestor Phone Number:	Today's Date:
Requestor Affiliation to Campus: ☐ Student ☐ Faculty ☐ Staff	Requestor Email Address:	Campus Affiliated Organization: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Event Location (Be specific; Building, Room Number):		Type of Event:
Date(s) of Event:	Start Time of Event: AM PM	End Time of Event: AM PM

Minimum Expected Attendance	Maximum Expected Attendance:	Approximate age of attendees: ☐ < 17 ☐ 17 or greater

Type of Permit Requested:
☐ Candle Use ☐ Incense – Type:_____ ☐ Other_____

Brief Description of Ceremony:

I understand that if the permit is approved, I must meet with Housing and Residential Education (or the appropriate department) to develop a plan for the ceremony. I agree to abide by the Open Flame Ceremony Procedure and any additional requirements listed below (after approval).

Requestor Signature	Date

The permit must be completed and submitted to the Environmental Health and Safety office a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the ceremony date.

Send the Completed Form to UNC Environmental Health & Safety Department at Campus Box 57 or 501 20th Street, Greeley CO 80639

Environmental Health and Safety USE ONLY

Fire Protection System Impaired (Check all that apply):

☐ Fire Alarm System ☐ Duct Detection System ☐ Smoke or Heat Detection System
☐ Water Supply ☐ Automatic Sprinkler System ☐ Other_____

Ceremony Information:

☐ Approved ☐ Denied

Comments:_____

EHS Review (Print Name):	EHS Signature	Date:

Additional Permit Requirements

Minimum Requirements:

☐ UNC Police Department (970) 351-2245 shall be notified 30 minutes prior to beginning the ceremony and when completed
☐ Open Flame Ceremony Procedure and Additional Permit Requirements shall be followed
☐ A fire watch shall be present when the ceremony begins and until all candles, incense, or open flames are extinguished and have stopped burning.

Send Completed forms to EHS at Campus Box 57