

Tobacco Offering Protocol

*Adapted from Carleton Centre for Indigenous Initiatives
and Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health*

The four sacred medicines are sweetgrass, tobacco, sage and cedar. Traditional people say that tobacco is always given first. It is used as an offering. Traditional tobacco was given to communicate with the spirit world.

When making a request of an Elder or traditional knowledge keeper, the protocol is to offer them tobacco. This would include hosting a KAIROS Blanket Exercise.

This is a guideline on how to make a tobacco tie:

1. **Acquire Tobacco:** Finding traditional ceremonial tobacco is the best option, however it is okay to offer no additive loose tobacco. You can purchase traditional ceremonial tobacco online from [Mother Earth Tobacco](#) or [Turtle Lodge Trading Post](#), or loose tobacco from a tobacco store. In Ottawa, ceremonial tobacco is available at Beaded Dreams, 426 Bank Street.
2. **Obtain Cloth:** Buy fabric to make your tobacco tie. Usually red but other colours are used too such as yellow, white or blue. You can purchase broad cloth from a fabric store. It's best if it is 100 % cotton. The places that sell ceremonial tobacco often sell broad cloth as well.
3. **Preparing the Tobacco Offering:** The person making the request should prepare the tobacco tie or pouch. As you prepare the offering, it is important to think about what you are requesting, and to have good thoughts while you prepare the tobacco tie. Here are step-by-step instructions on how to assemble your tobacco tie:
 - Cut your fabric in a square (4 inches by 4 inches)
 - Put a small amount of tobacco in the centre of the cloth
 - Fold all the ends of the cloth together
 - Tie the tobacco with a piece of yarn or twine; you can also cut a strip of the fabric to make a tie.



4. **Making a Request:** Offer the tobacco tie or pouch when you make your initial request. To make a request, offer the tobacco tie or pouch by holding it in your left hand in front of you, state your request (be specific), and if the person accepts your request, place the tobacco in their hand.

In the case of the KAIROS Blanket Exercise, the tobacco is given to the Elder or knowledge keeper first thing, as the session is starting.

Please note that protocols vary in different territories, it is important to consult with Elders or Knowledge Keepers.