

FIRST NATION ELDER PROTOCOL

Questions to ask:

- Name of Elder
- Spelling of name
- How they should be addressed
- Contact information

Appropriate honoraria:

- never ask the Elder
- the honoraria should be ascertained beforehand - keep in mind that you are asking to impose a monetary value on a sacred ceremony
- the honoraria respects the value of what the Elder is offering

Travel arrangements:

- be prepared to cover travelling costs (do you need to send a car or taxi to pick them up);
- will they be travelling on their own or with someone;
- name of travelling companion and whether or not that person requires payment

Food & beverages:

- find out in advance if the Elder has allergies, dietary requirements if they are invited to stay for breakfast, lunch or dinner
- in some cultures it is customary for the Elder to be served their food; definitely a must if the Elder has mobility challenges and can't carry a plate of food and use a walking stick
- some Elders will not participate in events where alcohol is being served; be sure to include this information when extending the invitation.

When contacting an Elder, remember that a phone call is better than a letter. Elders often rely more on the spoken word than the written word.

At large events consider having a quiet room where the Elder can prepare for the smudge or blessing, rest after travelling or before returning to their home. Also have a snack and a drink available upon their arrival or if it is midday or evening, plan to have a meal available.

During the ceremony, everyone stands, hats removed, heads' bowed, hands by side or clasped in front. Don't sit down until you are sure the Elder has finished speaking. Do not talk, text or take phone calls during the ceremony.

When the Elder has completed the ceremony, thank them and their companion. Ensure they are guided to the quiet room and offer the honoraria at that time, not in front of the audience/group. Once they are ready to make their way home, usher them to the front door and ensure their transportation is cued up.

From the AMAAS Conference in June 2017:

-Budget at least \$400 for two speakers+cost of tobacco

<http://www.tobaccooutlet.ca/>

\$50 per packet, Should be organic, chemical free, nothing fancy or flavoured, just plain tobacco.

Order online at

<http://motherearthtobacco.com/ceremonial-tobacco-sales.html>

Here's a protocol from another website

<https://carleton.ca/indigenous/resources/guidelines-for-working-with-elders/>

<https://carleton.ca/indigenous/resources/tobacco-offering-protocol/>

How to hand it to the Elder

When making a request, offer the tobacco by holding it in your left hand (in front of you), state your request (be specific), and if the Elder accepts your request place the tobacco in their left hand.

I am offering you this tobacco for the opening of our Conference AGM

Things to consider

-For internal auditing purposes, it is acceptable to ask Elders and to sign a receipt as acknowledgement of receiving their gift of appreciation that includes their contact information.

-travel expenses and monetary gifts could be considered separately

-Do not permit anyone to take a photo/video/audio recording during the blessing