


Title: Tobacco as it relates to religious or ceremonial use

PEBB Program Administrative Policy 91-2

Contact:	Policy and Rules Coordinator, ERB Division	Effective:	January 1, 2024
Associated RCW:	41.05.065	Owner:	Policy, Rules & Compliance Manager, ERB Division
Associated PEBB Board Policy Resolutions:	PEBB 2019-06	Approved by:	
Associated WAC:	182-08-015 182-08-185(1) 182-12-300	Position:	Director of the PEBB Program
Assoc. fed law/reg:	45 CFR 146.121(f)	Date approved:	September 5, 2023
Associated Forms & Communication	HCA 50-0100 HCA 50-0801 HCA 51-0205		

Purpose:

This policy applies whenever a Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) subscriber is attesting to an enrolled member’s tobacco use status. The purpose of the policy is to clarify the exception for the religious or ceremonial use of tobacco.

WAC 182-08-015 Definitions: “Tobacco use” means any use of tobacco products within the past two months. Tobacco use, however, does not include the religious or ceremonial use of tobacco.

Policy:

1. “Religious use of tobacco” means the use of tobacco products as part of a formal tradition, rite, or ritual. An example of this would be the use of tobacco products during a Native American religious ritual.
2. “Ceremonial use of tobacco” means the use of tobacco products for ceremonial purposes in connection with the practice of a traditional ceremony or ritual.
3. A subscriber may attest that an enrolled member does not use tobacco products if that enrollee’s only use within the past two months falls within the exception for religious or ceremonial use.