

## TERMINOLOGY & DEFINITIONS

R&R: Rules and Regulations

Monument or upright monument: Any marker that is not flat to the ground, this includes benches.

Full grave space: size sufficient to accommodate 1 casket and a cement vault

Cremation lot: holds 2-4 urns with or without a vault

Lot: collection of grave spaces

Foundation: Cement poured to support the weight of an upright monument.

Flush marker: marker flat to the ground

Deed: Official document showing the purchase of the right of burial in a particular lot

Interment: placement of a human body or ashes in the ground

Shrub: a woody bush or plant

Interment order: A document to be signed by a lot owner to open a grave space for an interment.

**ACTON CEMETERIES RULES AND REGULATIONS**  
**(updated and approved 6/10/2020)**

A. CEMETERY DEPARTMENT AND CEMETERY COMMISSION

1. The Acton Cemetery Department's address is 472 Main Street, Acton, MA 01720.  
The Acton Cemetery Office is located in Woodlawn Cemetery, 104 Concord Road.
  - Phone: (978) 929-6642
  - Email: cemetery@acton-ma.gov
2. The Cemetery Office holds the current version of the R&R. It is recommended that you inquire about the current version by phone, email, a letter to the Department, or visiting the Office.
3. The Cemetery Superintendent has direct charge of the cemeteries. The Superintendent is empowered to enforce the R&R.
4. The Acton Cemetery Commission
  - has compiled the R&R to protect the rights of a lot owner, and to enhance ease of maintenance and safe working conditions for Town employees.
  - has the authority to grant permission to proprietors to depart from the provisions of the R&R in cases where it clearly appears that the spirit and intent of the R&R will not thereby be violated.
  - reserves the right to revise and/or amend the R&R and the Rate Schedule at any time.

B. OWNERSHIP

1. No lot shall be sold to any association, group or organization.
2. The right granted to the owner of any lot is a sole and exclusive right of
  - burial of the human dead, and
  - installation of monuments or markers, subject to the R&R that are current at the time.
3. The proprietor of the right of burial, or the heirs, shall not grant, sell, alienate or convey the right of burial to anyone without first presenting written notice for the approval and consent of the Commission. Any right-of-burial owner who wishes to sell his/her lot shall so advise the Commission, which will repurchase the lot for the same sum that the owner paid at the time of purchase, provided that there are no interments or foundations in the lot.

C. GRAVE OPENING

1. Before any grave is opened, any outstanding obligation due the Town must be paid in full.
2. Only a person so authorized by the Cemetery Office can open a grave.

#### D. INTERMENTS

1. No interments are made on Sundays or on the following holidays:  
New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas.
2. Each interment shall be under the personal charge of the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee.
3. No interment shall be made until the Cemetery Office has
  - fees paid as listed in the Rate Schedule,
  - permit(s) required by the Laws of the Commonwealth and the Town, and
  - a signed interment order from the owner or representative of the lot.
4. All non-cremated interments shall be made in a concrete box of one-piece construction with a one-piece cover sufficient to permanently support the weight above it.
5. Cremated remains shall be in a container, the size of which shall not exceed 16"x16"x16"
6. The scattering of ashes is NOT permitted in the cemeteries.
7. The Cemetery Department shall not be held responsible for any order given or mistake occurring due to the lack of precise and proper information or instructions as to the particular space, size and location in the lot where an interment is desired.
8. The Cemetery Department reserves the right to correct any errors that may be made by it in making interments (or removals), and shall not be held liable due to the failure of any device to operate normally or to conditions beyond its control.

#### E. FLUSH MARKERS AND UPRIGHT MONUMENTS

1. The location of flush markers and monuments shall be determined by the Cemetery Superintendent.
2. Only one upright monument is allowed on a lot. It must be centered on the lot.
3. Only one flush marker is allowed per grave space. Maximum size of 24"x12" on a cremation lot and 24" x 18" on a full grave space.
4. On all single graves, and on certain lots, as determined by the cemetery superintendent, only flush markers are allowed.
5. Flush markers are not allowed on those cremation lots that allow for an upright monument.
6. Flush markers must be constructed of bronze or stone.
7. A 3' X 1' flush marker is allowed provided it straddles two full grave spaces and serves as the allowed flush marker for both graves.
8. The Cemetery Department is not responsible for damage to photo covers on flush markers.
9. Cleaning of monuments and flush markers is the responsibility of the lot owner.
10. Installing flush markers and monuments  
All foundations and flush markers must be installed by cemetery personnel.  
Timing of foundation installations shall be at the discretion of the Cemetery Superintendent.

Fees for flush markers and monuments must be paid in advance of installation.  
Markers will not be placed (nor lettering allowed) on any lot that has not been paid for in full.

11. Orders for flush markers or upright monuments, or for inscription work, cleaning, repairing or removal of markers or monuments must be in writing. Order blanks are available at the Cemetery Office. Orders are to be completed by the supplier, signed by the lot owner or representative, and returned to the Office for approval.

#### **F. MONUMENT BASE AND DIE SIZES**

1. The maximum monument size is determined by how many graves wide the lot is.  
2-GRAVES WIDE 3'6" X 1'2"  
3-GRAVES WIDE 4' X 1'2"  
4-GRAVES WIDE 5' X 1'2"
2. The maximum overall height of a monument is 3 feet.
3. The seat of bench style monuments must adhere to the size restrictions listed above.
4. A non-conforming monument or flush marker must be approved by the Cemetery Commission in advance of installation.

#### **G. ABOVE GROUND CRYPTS**

1. Each crypt site will be chosen by the Cemetery Superintendent and approved by the Cemetery Commission.
2. Plans for the crypt must be submitted to and approved by the Cemetery Commission prior to installation and include:
  - A detailed sketch of the structure,
  - Specific dimensions of the structure, and
  - Any specific requirements for the crypt's construction and future maintenance.
3. A Perpetual Care fee determined by the Cemetery Commission, payable in advance of installation, will be established based on crypt size and any specific maintenance requirements.

#### **H. PERMIT VIOLATIONS**

1. The Cemetery Department reserves the right to remove or modify any stone or inscription which does not conform to the permit or deed conditions or has been installed without the proper permit. The Cemetery Department reserves the right to remove offensive structures or markers as determined by the Cemetery Commission.
- I. IN-GROUND FLOWERBEDS
    1. Flowerbeds may be planted in front of an upright monument only. The length of the flowerbed shall not exceed the length of the monument, the width of the garden shall not exceed 12 inches. No borders, crushed stone or bark mulch is permitted. No thorn bearing plants are permitted.
    2. A Flower Fund may be established to provide for a flowerbed in front of an upright monument. The money paid to establish this fund will be deposited in the Perpetual Care Fund and proper record shall be kept by the Cemetery Office as to pertinent data as required by the donor.

J. TREES AND SHRUBS

1. Planting of trees and shrubs is allowed at the discretion of the Superintendent. Permission for the planting must be obtained from the Cemetery Office. The lot owner will provide the item(s) to be planted. All plantings must be done by Cemetery personnel.
2. On lots where shrubs are allowed, there will be an additional Perpetual Care charge per shrub, payable at or before the time of planting. This charge is for care only, not replacement.
3. Shrubs are not to exceed an approximate height of three feet.
4. If any tree or shrub on any lot or grave becomes unsightly, detrimental, or proves inconvenient to the performance of work by Cemetery personnel, the Superintendent can order its removal.

K. DECORATIONS

1. Living potted plants, unless picked up by the owners, will be removed and disposed of 10 days after Memorial Day or at the discretion of the Superintendent.
2. For flush markers, flowerpots shall be placed on the marker so they do not cause injury to the grass.
3. Plants, flowers or any other decorations on a lot will be removed by Cemetery personnel if, for any reason, they present a safety hazard or become unsightly.
4. **All seasonal decorations will be removed on the first Mondays of December and March.**
5. The Cemetery Department is not responsible for flowers or any other decorations placed on graves or lots.

L. **ALLOWED ONLY WITH PRIOR PERMISSION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

1. Gathering of flowers in the cemeteries, either wild or cultivated.
2. Carrying out of cut flowers brought into the cemetery for decoration.
3. Placing of any urns, boxes, markers, boxed wreaths, fences, curbing, hedges, trees, ornaments or memorials of a permanent nature upon any grave or lot.
4. Gravestone rubbings.

M. **NOT ALLOWED**

1. The scattering of ashes.
2. Marking, defacing or injuring any monument or other cemetery structure.
3. Any other behavior unbefitting the sanctity of a cemetery.
4. Firearms, except for use in military, law enforcement, or Acton Minutemen salutes.
5. Vigil lights, crushed stone or bark around a monument or marker, glass or metal cans as flower containers, or cement urns.
6. Breaking or removal of the sod under any condition where no upright monument has been erected.
7. Items attached to, placed in or hung from cemetery trees or shrubs.
8. Placement of poles or posts to accommodate such items.
9. Artificial flowers from April 1 through November 31.
10. Signs or lettered boards of any kind.
11. Refuse. Refuse may be discarded in cemetery trash receptacles.
12. Children, except when accompanied by a parent or by another responsible adult.
13. Dogs, with the exception of service dogs.
14. Metal detecting on Cemetery land.