

Cemetery Commission - Rules and Regulations

The cemetery grounds are maintained and controlled by the Cemetery Commission. All burial grounds in the Town are under the control of the Cemetery Commission, both public and private. All visitors are requested to keep in mind that the cemeteries are consecrated to the memories of those who are buried within. Dignified behavior is expected and will be required. In the many years of cemetery operation, it has been shown that it is necessary to adopt and enforce regulations to govern the conduct of visitors, ensure respect for the dead, protection of the grounds, and the safety of the visitors. The rules and regulations are fair and common sense guidelines.

Rules for Visiting a Cemetery

- * The speed limit is 15 MPH
- * Park on roads only
- * Walk on roads and paths only
- * Do not trespass on private lots and graves
- * Sunbathing, picnicking, drinking and playing in cemeteries is not permitted
- * Loud boisterous or undignified behavior will not be tolerated
- * Dogs and other pets are not permitted on the grounds
- * Picking of blossoms, flowers or foliage is prohibited

Purchase of a Cemetery Lot

The sale of any lot may be made to any Chatham real estate taxpayer or any resident of the Town of Chatham. In the event a resident of over ten years has been forced to live outside of Chatham due to conditions beyond his control, he may purchase a lot as a special condition of this regulation. The person or his estate must show evidence of residency to qualify. In any case, not more than two (2) grave lots will be conveyed to any person, and for the purpose of this regulation, a married couple will be considered as one entity. In cemeteries where there are single lots, not more than four grave lots may be sold as a group.

The sale of any lot will in no case include any part of a roadway, path or walkway, and in no case may a lot be purchased for the sole purpose of resale. In the event that the purchaser of a lot is unable to use the lot or wishes to dispose of a lot(s), the lot must be returned to the Town of Chatham, Cemetery Commission. The owner of any lot(s) being returned shall be paid the current price for an equal size lot. Any portion of the original purchase fee that was indicated to be put into a perpetual care fund will not be refunded. The original fee including the perpetual care fees may be refunded if the lot has not been used and the current owner has owned the lot for two years or less, from the date of purchase.

The title of the owner of a lot may not be changed without the permission of the Cemetery Commission and all requests must be made in writing.

Use of Burial Lot

No burial may be made in any cemetery or burial ground in the Town of Chatham without the prior approval of the Cemetery Commission. All requests for burial must be made with a minimum of a forty-eight hour notice.

No grave may be opened or reopened without a written request to the Cemetery Commission.

No lot owner shall permit a burial on any lot if the deceased is not a relative or an heir of the lot owner without written approval of the Cemetery Commission.

No lot may be used for any other purpose than the burial of human remains. The use of a burial vault or a concrete burial box is required for all burials. No ashes shall be spread on the surface of any lot and all ashes being buried on any lot shall be in an urn or a similar type container.

Following a burial in any cemetery or burial ground, the funeral residue must be removed from the lot within two weeks of the burial. Any residue found on any lot after two weeks from the time of burial may be removed at the discretion of the Cemetery Commission.

Items of personal remembrance may be left on any burial plot between November 15th and April 15th. At any other time of the year, the items must be removed within two weeks of the burial for the maintenance and care of the cemetery. In the event the items of personal remembrance have not been removed within a two week period after the date of the burial, the items may be removed at the discretion of the Cemetery Commission and will be disposed of in the customary manner.

Cemetery Commission Liability

The Cemetery Commission will exercise all reasonable care to protect the monuments, markers, and plantings on all burial sites. The Commission will not be responsible for any and all damage caused by routine maintenance or vandalism in any cemetery or burial ground in the Town of Chatham.

Any personal injuries sustained by anyone violating the rules and regulations of the Cemetery Commission will not be the responsibility of the Commission or the Town of Chatham.

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Any damage to a lot or grave markers caused by a burial or by a private contractor working in a cemetery or burial ground shall be the responsibility of the contractor or the burial vault company.

Monuments, Markers and Permanent Amenities

No monuments, markers, headstones, or borders shall be placed on any lot without prior approval of the Cemetery Commission. This rule shall apply to any type of bench, fence, or curbing. All monuments, markers, and headstones shall be placed on concrete footings which are adequate to support the weight of said amenities, and any borders or curbing shall be set flush

with the ground so as to not hinder the general maintenance of the cemetery grounds.

Markers for cremation plots, when developed in a cemetery in the Town, shall be limited to flat markers, approximately 1' by 2' set flush with the ground on a concrete foundation.

Any markers, headstones, or corner markers improperly set shall be moved and placed in the proper location on a concrete foundation at the expense of the lot owner.

The maintenance, repair, and cleaning of any headstones or grave markers are the responsibility of the lot owner. In the event the lot owner is deceased and there are no heirs of the original owner of the lot, the Cemetery Commission shall have the right to maintain, repair, and clean any headstones or grave markers, as funds will allow.

When installing corner markers, lot corner pipes may not be removed.

Use of Lots Regarding Plantings and Ground Cover

No type of ground cover or plantings shall be permitted on any lot or within any cemetery in the Town of Chatham without the approval of the Cemetery Commission prior to any work being done. Plantings of trees shall be of such size, variety, and located in such a manner as to not hinder the general maintenance of the cemetery grounds. This regulation shall also cover sodding and seeding of cemetery lots.

The use of lawn sprinklers is not permitted in any cemetery. No watering device is to be left unattended. Only hand held nozzles, which are attended, may be used. Any water found to be on and not attended shall be turned off without notice by any member of the Cemetery Commission, staff members, or the Chatham Police Department.

There shall be no glass jars or glass receptacles used for any purpose in a cemetery.

Potted plants, baskets and floral arrangements are to be removed from any area of the cemeteries when the arrangements have served their useful life. This is the responsibility of the lot owners. Christmas wreaths and greens shall be allowed to decorate a burial plot from the last week in November to February 1st of the following year.

Any flag standards on any lot are not the responsibility of the Cemetery Commission. In the event a flag or standard is missing, the owner of said lot shall contact the organization for the replacement of the same, such as the V.F.W., Legion, Fire and Police Departments, or any other organization. In the event a member of the family is a veteran and has been buried in a Chatham Cemetery, for information regarding flag standards and flags, please contact the V.F.W. at 508-945-0554. The Cemetery Commission may properly dispose of any flags found in the cemeteries that are broken or damaged.

Existing plantings that are in the cemeteries that have overgrown and are interfering with the use of any ways, roadways, or the use of adjoining lots, or are deemed to be causing damage to adjoining lots shall be removed by the lot owner of said lot. The Cemetery Commission shall have the sole right to make the determination if plantings or trees are causing an obstruction or are a problem to adjoining lots, or a maintenance problem for the Commission. In the event the trees or plantings are restricting the immediate burial on an adjoining lot, the Cemetery

Commission shall have the sole right to take whatever action necessary to permit the burial. Other than the conditions created by an immediate burial, the Cemetery Commission shall make a reasonable effort to contact a lot owner regarding obstructions caused by overgrown trees and plantings, or trees and plantings improperly placed in the cemetery. In the event that the Cemetery Commission cannot locate or contact the owner or heirs of the owner, the Commission shall put one notice in the local newspaper of said condition. Said notice shall give the common name of the cemetery, the name of the lot owner where the problem exists, the lot number, and a short description of the necessary work. Fourteen days after the notice has appeared in the local newspaper, if the Commission has not been contacted, the Commission may take whatever action the Commission feels necessary to correct the matter. The cost of any work shall be billed to a lot owner when a responsible party can be found.

These rules and regulations shall replace any and all prior rules and regulations of the Cemetery Commission. Each section of these rules and regulations shall be construed as separate to the end that if any clause, phrase, section, or sentence thereof shall be held invalid for any reason, the remainder of the rules and regulations shall continue in full force and effect. These rules and regulations may be amended from time to time by the Cemetery Commission for the Town of Chatham as provided for in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws.

These rules and regulations shall take effect on May 9, 2005.

(Cemetery Commission)