



## Rules & Regulations — of the — Cemetery Commission

These Rules and Regulations are promulgated under the authority of Mass. General Laws Chapter 114, Section 23. They shall apply, unless otherwise noted, to all cemeteries operated by the Freetown Cemetery Commission.

### Part I: General Rules

- a. Hours.** Cemeteries are open from sunrise until sunset.
- b. Snow & Ice.** During winter months, visitors enter the cemeteries at their own risk when lanes are covered with snow and ice.
- c. Operation of Motor Vehicles.** The speed limit on all cemetery drives is 15 MPH. Horses and carriages may enter the cemetery as part of a funeral procession. Farm vehicles may pass through the East Freetown Cemetery where rights-of-way exist.
- d. Garbage.** Due to repeated abuses, trash barrels are no longer provided, and the cemeteries shall operate on a "carry in, carry out" basis. Disposing of household garbage within the cemeteries shall be considered fineable littering.
- e. Dogs.** Dogs are prohibited within the cemeteries at all times, other than service dogs.
- f. Alcohol.** Alcohol is not permitted within the cemeteries at any time.
- g. Limits of Liability.** The Town will take every reasonable precaution to protect the private property of lot and grave owners within each cemetery from loss or damage, but it disclaims all responsibility for loss or damage from causes

beyond its control, especially from the acts of thieves and vandals, and from Acts of God. Due to the age and terrain of the town's cemeteries, they have many inherent hazards. Entry upon cemetery grounds is the acceptance of these risks, releasing the Town of Freetown from any and all liability and/or claims.

### Part II: Sales of Lots & Burials

- a. Marking of Lots.** All lots shall be marked with a flat or upright headstone within twelve months of purchase, unless an extension is granted by the Cemetery Commission. Corner posts must be made of a permanent material, set at ground level, and be installed at the same time as the headstone. Effective in 2017, "front-half" cremation lots may only have flat gravestones. The Cemetery Commission shall not be responsible for locating lots which are not properly marked.
- b. Notification of Installation or Carving.** The Cemetery Commission shall be notified by the monument company or stonecutter whenever a new monument is placed or an existing monument is updated. This shall be for record-keeping purposes only and is not meant to imply a requirement of approval.
- c. Funerals & Interments.** Funerals should begin no earlier than 9:00 a.m. and end no later than 5:00 p.m. unless other arrangements are made in advance. No services may be conducted at the Assonet Burying Ground after 11:00 a.m. on July 3rd, nor before 1:00 p.m. on July 4th.  
  
The Cemetery Commission shall be notified at least 72 hours before any burial takes place. The Cemetery Commission shall not be responsible for the preparation of the cemetery if this notice is not given as required.
- d. Vaults.** All interments, other than cremations, shall be in a permanent container such as

cement or bronze vaults or in a concrete sectional vault.

**e. Assignment of Burial Space, by the Cemetery Commission.** The Cemetery Commission may, at its discretion, choose to assign lots sequentially in any section or cemetery.

**f. Assignment of Burial Space, by a Lot Owner.** An individual owning multiple graves may assign those graves to others by completing a Burial Rights form, which may be obtained from the Cemetery Commission.

**g. Resale of Lots.** Anyone owning and wishing to sell a cemetery lot must sell it back to the Town. The person selling will be refunded what they originally paid for the lot, not including perpetual care, and the Town will resell at the prevailing price. This shall apply to graves originally sold by the Town on or after October 1, 2007.

**h. Payment Plans.** The "Payment Plan Policy" adopted June 12, 2017, is incorporated in these rules by reference.

**i. Gravediggers.** No person may dig graves without a license from the Cemetery Commission. All licensees shall maintain insurance as required.

### Part III: Decorations

**a. Flags.** American flags placed on the graves of veterans, and markers for holding such flags, are under the sole care and custody of the Veterans' Graves Officer, and shall not be moved or removed except under his guidance and direction. Unauthorized tampering or removal is punishable by law.

**b. Plantings.** Shrubs should never exceed the height of the stone. Live flowers and small plants may be planted within twelve inches of the gravestone.

**c. Temporary Decorations.** All temporary decorations and markers must be durable, suitably anchored, and easily removable. Temporary decorations become the property of the Town as soon as they are placed and can be removed or modified at any time without notice. The Town shall not be held liable to any owner for the cost of such items.

Artificial flowers, plants, etc., placed during the winter months should be placed no earlier than November 1st and must be removed no later than March 31st. After that date, they may be removed without notice.

**d. Christmas Wreaths.** Christmas wreaths must be removed by January 31st.

**e. Flowers and Potted Plants.** If artificial or cut flowers or potted plants are used, the Town reserves the right to remove them when they are unsightly. This would also apply to wreaths, baskets of greens, and any other objects that have become unsightly.

**f. Prohibited Decorations.** Glass or ceramic containers or ornaments, crushed stone, and other decorations which might interfere with mowing are not acceptable and may be removed without notice.

**g. Benches Prohibited.** Effective October 23, 2017, all persons are prohibited from placing benches in the cemeteries. This prohibition shall not apply to headstone-benches that are approved in advance by the Cemetery Commission.

**h. Eternal Flames.** Eternal flames are prohibited.

*Adopted: October 1, 2007  
Latest Revision: June 5, 2019*

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS  
FOR LOTS IN THE VETERANS SECTION  
OF THE ASSONET BURYING GROUND**

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 25, 2012  
REVISED JUNE 5, 2019

*These regulations are intended to ensure uniformity.*

- a. Availability:** Lots are available to servicemen, spouses, and dependent children only.
- b. Headstones:**
  - i. Only upright marble headstones of standard VA size, shape, and lettering are permitted within these sections. Where a serviceman does not qualify for a free headstone issued by the VA, a matching stone must be purchased from a commercial dealer. No other type or design of stone is permitted.
  - ii. Effective June 5, 2019, these rules are clarified to require each lot in the Veterans Section to have its own headstone. A veteran and spouse may only share a headstone if one or both are cremated. This is to ensure uniformity of appearance throughout the Veterans Section.
- c.** No decorations or plantings of any kind shall be allowed, except as outlined in items (d) and (e).
- d.** Christmas wreaths may be placed no earlier than Thanksgiving Day and must be removed by January 31st or they will be removed by the Town. No artificial materials permitted.
- e.** Flowers and wreaths for Memorial Day must be removed by June 15th. Flowers or wreaths for Veterans Day must be removed by November 30th. No artificial materials are permitted.
- f.** Lots can be reserved at any time. An application form will be provided to ensure eligibility and reserve lots. Reservation will guarantee a

quantity of lots, but not specific lots. Lots will be assigned in sequence as need arises.

- g.** Should any questions or issues arise with regard to the Veterans Section that are not otherwise covered by these regulations, the Cemetery Commission shall render a decision on a case-by-case basis, and that decision shall be final.

**QUESTIONS / COMMENTS**

To contact the Cemetery Commission with questions, comments, or concerns, please e-mail

[cemetery@freetownma.gov](mailto:cemetery@freetownma.gov)

or call the Town Hall at (508) 644-2203.