

PARISH

CEMETERY

GUIDE

A resource of recommended office procedures, field operations, and legalities for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati parish cemetery

By

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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to introduce the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Parish Cemetery Guide.

This initial Guide was developed due to our team's passion for this ministry and desire to assist any Catholic cemetery, especially those in our own Archdiocese. It is our hope that this Guide be a repository of recommended practices and resources to assist those charged with managing parish cemeteries.

If any statement in this Guide differs in any way with Archdiocese of Cincinnati policies and procedures, please follow those policies and procedures, but please also reach out to us and let us know how the guide differs. Also, please let us know of suggested changes to the Guide that would be helpful for most parish cemeteries.

In a future release of the Guide we hope to add hot links to a webpage where related forms templates will be available for download.

Special thanks are in order to Dan Pohorence, Director of Parish and Regional Cemeteries, and the Diocese of Rochester for allowing us to use their past efforts as a foundation for this Guide. Thanks also go out to the Catholic Cemetery Conference and the Catholic Cemeteries of Ohio. These organizations and their members have provided us with substantial opportunity for education, networking, and other support around all things related to Catholic cemeteries.

We hope this will facilitate the work of those dedicated to performing the Corporal Work of Mercy of burying and caring for the resting places of the faithful departed in our parish cemeteries. We look forward to continually serving the burial needs of the faithful of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Thomas J. Jordan, CCCE
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CEMETERY TERMINOLOGY

The following definitions cover terms used in the Cemetery Policies as well as terms used by personnel of the Cemeteries. As used in these Cemetery Policies, the following terms shall have the meaning hereinafter defined, unless a contrary intention appears from the context of any particular regulation.

Affidavit

A signed statement, duly sworn to by the maker thereof, before a notary public or other officer authorized to administer oaths.

Area

An Area is a segregated space within a Cemetery section with a unique name (unique within the section) that would generally contain similar types of burial locations. The Area may be further segregated, generally by Lot and Grave (or Row and Crypt or Niche).

Burial

The disposition of human remains.

Burial Permit

A document issued by a state registrar verifying that a death certificate has been filed and giving permission to transport and make final disposition of the remains of a dead human body. A permit may also be required for a disinterment, disentombment, or disinurnment.

Burial Right

The privilege of interment, entombment, or inurnment in the Cemetery. A Burial Right DOES NOT convey any right, title or interest in and to the land or structures themselves.

Certificate of Burial Rights

The Certificate of Burial Rights is issued to an individual and grants the right of burial via interment, inurnment, or entombment in a specific grave, niche or crypt. It has sometimes been referred to as a deed, easement, or lot certificate. It does not convey ownership of land or other interest in the grave, niche, or crypt to which it refers.

Burial Right Owner

The person whose name is recorded on the Certificate of Burial Rights as the purchaser of burial rights.

Burial Vault

The burial vault is a concrete, steel, copper, bronze, fiberglass, plastic or other rigid container placed in the ground before burial. After the casket is lowered into the vault, the domed vault lid is placed on top and sealed. The purpose is to prevent the ground from caving in as the casket deteriorates over time.

Care Funds

Care Funds are monies given to the Cemetery to hold for the benefit of a specific burial space, group of spaces, building, or other structure. Care Funds must be separately accounted for both as to monies received and periodic usage. Care Funds are classified as a liability because the money is given by the customer for a specific purpose and cannot be invaded or restricted by any other use by the parish or Cemetery.

Casket

A rigid container designed for the encasement of human remains and customarily constructed of wood or metal, ornamented and lined with fabric.

Casket Protector/Casket Wrap

A covering for the casket to help above-ground crypts to remain dry, clean, and free of insect infestation.

Casket Tray

The outer casing placed beneath a casket prior to entombment to help keep fluids contained to the crypt.

Catholic Cemetery

A sacred place blessed and consecrated for the interment, inurnment, and entombment of human remains. Includes all land, buildings, roads and improvements.

Columbarium

A structure with niches (small spaces) for placing cremated human remains in urns or other approved containers. It may be outdoors, indoors, or part of a mausoleum generally in a community setting such as a garden or chapel mausoleum.

Contractor

Any person, firm or corporation other than an employee of the Cemetery performing any work on Cemetery grounds.

Cremated Remains

Human remains after incineration in a crematory.

Cremation

The process by which the body of the deceased is reduced to its basic elements by burning. Cremation is permitted for Catholics as long as it is not chosen in denial of Christian teaching on the Resurrection and sacredness of the human body.

Crematory

The facility where the remains of deceased human being are processed by cremation.

Cremation Niche

The final resting place for cremated human remains in a Cemetery building.

Cremation Vault

A required container or outer receptacle made of concrete, metal, fiberglass, or durable plastic used for the protection of an urn buried in the ground.

Crypt

A space in a mausoleum or other building designed to hold whole body human remains.

- Abby Companion Crypt - A crypt located at the first level, commonly referred to as an A Level crypt in a mausoleum building whereas the companion crypt retaining the first entombment at ground level. Some Abby Companion Crypts are also designed for four entombments whereas the first two are located at ground level and the second two caskets are located above.
- Companion Side-by-Side Crypt - The placing of two caskets into individual crypts next to each other (side to side) whereas one crypt front is placed covering both crypt fronts.
- Single Crypt - A crypt designed for one casket space.
- True Companion Crypt - The placing of two caskets into a single crypt with one crypt front.
- Couch Crypt - The horizontal placing of two caskets into a single crypt next to each other (side to side) with one crypt front.

Disinterment

Disinterment is the recovery of human remains by exhumation, disentombment, or disinurnment.

Disposition

The placement of cremated or whole human remains in their final resting place.

Entombment

The placement of (not cremated) human remains in an above or below ground mausoleum crypt.

Family (Private) Mausoleum

A structure above ground, or partially above and partially below ground, containing crypts, owned by a person(s), the use of which is restricted to a group of persons related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption.

Foundation

The in-ground base, often concrete or granite, upon which a memorial is installed.

Funeral Services (distinct from the liturgical rites of the Church)

Funeral Services are those provided by a funeral director and staff, which may include consulting with the family on funeral planning; transportation, shelter, refrigeration and embalming of remains; preparing and filing notices; obtaining authorizations and permits; and coordinating with the Cemetery, crematory or other third parties.

Grave

A Grave is the location where a deceased body is buried. It is sometimes referred to as a plot, crypt, or niche. Graves are usually located in special areas set aside for the purpose of burial, such as graveyards or Cemeteries.

Green Burial

Green Burial is a way of caring for the deceased with minimal environmental impact that aids in the conservation of natural resources, reduction of carbon emissions, protection of worker health, and the restoration and/or preservation of habitat. It is sometimes referred to as natural burial. Green burial necessitates the use of non-toxic and biodegradable materials, such as caskets, shrouds, and urns. Three categories of Green Burials are as follows:

- Dark Green – Burial in shroud, no casket, no embalming, no concrete vault, no headstone
- Middle Green – Burial in a biodegradable casket made from sustainably grown material, such as bamboo or simple pine; no embalming; no concrete vault around casket; deceased's name engraved on one of the boulders near the site
- Light Green – Similar to "Middle Green", but embalming is allowed using organic, non-formaldehyde-based embalming liquids

Interment

Burial of human remains below ground, beneath the earth.

Interment Order

Interment Orders, sometimes referred to as Funeral Orders or Interment Cards, are required and originated from the Cemetery office, and provide all necessary information regarding location, burial date, deceased, deceased relationship to the grave, crypt, or niche burial right owner, person authorizing burial, and memorialization.

Inurnment

The placing of cremated human remains in an urn and placement in a niche, grave, or other suitable location in a Cemetery.

Location

A particular burial space where a grave, crypt, or niche is found. Locations are designated by an organized system of numbers and letters. A burial location is larger than a grave (or crypt interior or niche interior) for safety and separation from other graves (or crypt interiors or niche interiors).

Location Record

Contains all relevant information about a particular burial space such as Burial Right ownership, usage designations, burials, and memorialization. This may be an electronic record, paper record, or both. Lot Cards are an example and were often created with basic information during design layout for each lot and subsequently filled in with relevant more detailed information.

Lot

A segregated space within a Cemetery Area with a unique name (unique within the area) that would generally contain similar types of burial locations. It is sometimes referred to as a row. The Lot may be further segregated generally by Location (or Grave or Crypt or Niche).

Mausoleum

An external free-standing building constructed as a monument enclosing the entombment space or burial chamber of a deceased person or persons. A mausoleum may be considered a type of tomb, or the tomb may be considered to be within the mausoleum. A mausoleum may sometimes include a chapel. Mausolea is generally accepted as the plural form of mausoleum.

Memorial

Shall include a monument, tombstone, headstone, grave marker, or tablet or inscription on a crypt or niche front, for one or more deceased persons.

Memorialization Application

Memorialization Application requests are required to insure compliance with the design criteria established by the Cemetery. This application must identify the material including color, dimensions, and inscriptions. A dimensional sketch provided by the memorial dealer showing all inscriptions, designs and lettering that will be included in the final design must be presented.

Monument

A church monument is a type of structure explicitly created to commemorate the dead, above or near their grave, and having religious symbols/wording.

Operating Fund

A fund used for the day to day operations of the Cemetery. This fund includes monies received from burial and other Cemetery services, some portion of sales of burial rights, and other sources of income. Cemetery operating expenses are paid from this fund. The fund is managed separately from the parish operating funds.

Niche

A space in a columbarium or mausoleum intended to hold an urn.

Opening

The act of digging a grave or breaking the seal of a crypt or niche in order to perform an interment, entombment, or inurnment.

Permanent Maintenance Fund

A Permanent Maintenance Fund is restricted for the purpose of the maintenance and preservation of the Cemetery. Permanent Maintenance Funds cannot be used for any other purpose other than to generate income to maintain/develop the Cemetery. Funds are derived from money that is specifically charged on a contract or allocated from the sale of each burial right.

Pin

A portion of strong, long lasting material (stainless steel pins are currently available on the market), placed beneath the ground at the corners of a lot. Pins are often stamped or carved with lot numbers.

Pre-need

The sale of a Burial Right or memorialization in advance of actual need.

Purchaser

The person who has signed the Sales Contract for the purchase of Burial Rights, services, or products.

Sales Contract

A contract that constitutes the legally binding agreement between the parties for right to burial in a specific location and/or a burial service and should be documented consistent with a form of a retail sales contract. Sales contracts should be signed by both the buyer and the Cemetery and the buyer should be provided a copy for their permanent records.

Section

A segregated space of the Cemetery with a unique name that would generally contain similar types of burial locations. The locations could include in ground as well as building burial locations. The section may be further segregated, generally by Area, Lot, and Grave (or Building, Row, and Crypt or Niche).

Temporary Marker

A marker placed on a gravesite after burial, generally removed at the time a permanent memorial is placed. The Cemetery should diligently work with the family to get a permanent memorial placed; however, the temporary marker should be removed after a reasonable amount of time to not give the illusion that it is permanent.

Urn

A required container to hold cremated human remains. It can be placed in a columbarium, mausoleum, or buried in the ground (inside a cremation vault).

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Alternative 1) Straight Line Management

The parish Pastor will serve as the Director of the parish Cemetery with additional staff or clergy appointed as Executive Director, Managers, Supervisors, or other staff, as determined to be necessary for efficient operation of the Cemetery. The benefit of this structure is to allow for the direct involvement of the Pastor and a streamlined decision-making and communications process. The potential for problems with this structure is great if the management is inexperienced in Cemetery operation or general management principles. While this vulnerability can be overcome, it should involve a deliberate commitment to education and networking through demonstrated state, regional, and national Catholic Cemetery associations to ensure exposure to ministry best practices, trends, and product availability.

Alternative 2) Cemetery Advisory Committee

The parish may establish a Cemetery Advisory Committee (the "Committee") in accordance with Archdiocese procedures to assist the Pastor/Administrator in managing the Cemetery.

CEMETERY FUNDS

Cemetery Funds should not be commingled or combined with parish funds. The Cemetery, although part of the parish, is a clear and distinct unit. The Cemetery funds must be separated both by accounting records and in separate bank and investment accounts specifically identified by the name of the Cemetery.

Operating Fund

The Operating Fund is used for the day to day operations of the Cemetery. This fund includes monies received from burial and other Cemetery services, some portion of sales of burial rights and other sources of income. Cemetery operating expenses are paid from this fund.

Permanent Maintenance Fund

All parish Cemeteries should have a Permanent Maintenance Fund to generate sufficient income to maintain the Cemetery in "perpetuity". Permanent maintenance of the Cemetery, columbaria and mausoleums requires funds be set aside to yield a flow of earnings to cover the costs of maintaining the grounds when income ceases. Permanent Maintenance Funds should not be used for any other purpose.

A recommended 20% of revenue including sales of burial rights, vaults, burials, foundations and installations, vault handling, monuments and installations, etc. should be transferred to the Permanent Maintenance Fund as sales occur throughout the year. If Cemetery finances allow, depositing more than the minimum is encouraged, which could help ensure the future viability of the Cemetery.

Parishes can fund or grow Permanent Maintenance Funds through second collections, campaigns and/or appeals, in accordance with Archdiocese procedures, and deposit the proceeds from these fundraisers, less fundraising expenses, into the Permanent Maintenance Fund.

Permanent Maintenance Funds must be invested in accordance with Archdiocese procedures.

Appropriate level of Permanent Maintenance Fund and how it is estimated

Each Cemetery needs to estimate the size of the Permanent Maintenance Fund required for continuing care and contribute funds consistently until the required level is realized. The amount of funds set aside in a Permanent Maintenance Fund will vary based on Cemetery specific operational costs. Such amounts should be sufficient to generate enough income to maintain the Cemetery when there are no sales of burial rights, burials or other sources of income.

Over the *very long* term the return on stock market invested capital is expected to be approximately 6% to 7% above inflation. In Cemetery terms, long term can be centuries. The long term inflation rate is about 3%. If the long term return on capital is 9.5%, then 6.5% is the true long term return on money after inflation. That 6.5% must cover the cost of maintaining the Cemetery. To determine the level of funds necessary to cover maintenance costs, simply divide the maintenance operating cost by 6.5% to determine the target amount of the Permanent Maintenance Funds.

Here is an example given the following expense assumptions at the time income ceases, but based on current prices:

Operating Costs (such as, but not limited to)	
Administrative salaries & benefits	\$8,000
Annual mowing	3,000
Annual trimming	1,000
Ground care	550
Seed, fertilizer etc.	250
Fuel	250
Tools & supplies	250
Equipment and other non-recurring cost	1,000
Total Operating Expenses	\$14,300
Divided by long term expected return on investment, net of inflation (subject to change)	6.5% or (.065)
Estimated Permanent Maintenance Fund target	\$220,000

In this example the Permanent Maintenance Fund target is \$220,000 to adequately insure that sufficient funds are available to provide for the permanent upkeep of the Cemetery. Periodically, the calculation needs to be reviewed and revised if warranted. As current costs increase the Fund target will increase as well.

Some cautions when determining Permanent Maintenance Fund target amounts

- If your long term return on capital is expected to be less than 9.5%, the return used in your target calculation should be your expected long term return on capital less 3% inflation
- This is the target once income ceases. If your Cemetery is 75% sold out and you are confident you will sell the remainder at reasonable prices over a reasonable period, you may multiply the calculated target by 75%. The result is the estimate of the amount you should have in the fund currently.
- If your Permanent Maintenance Fund balance is considerably lower than it should be get aggressive at building it over the time you have left. The only wrong answer is to do nothing.

RECORDS

Location Record

The most common denominator of all transactions with persons is that they all are generally tied to a single location or group of locations. An individual Location Record is maintained for each developed burial and memorialization (if separate from burial) location within the Cemetery.

The location record includes information fields for related location designation, location type, sales contracts, burial right ownership and designations, burials, outer containers, memorialization, notes, and documents. It can be either a physical document or an electronic record in a cemetery records management system. The location record may have only the Cemetery location designation and location type when it is created. As activity occurs the relevant fields are filled in.

Physical location record documents should be filed in their own Location Designation file folder, and those folders should be filed in location designation order. Copies or originals of other documents will be placed in these folders as well. If an electronic records management system is used all related documents can be scanned and attached to the electronic location record.

Sales Contract

A Sales Contract constitutes the legally binding agreement between the parties for right to burial in a specific location and/or a burial service and should be documented consistent with a form of a retail sales contract. Sales contracts should be signed by both the buyer and the Cemetery and the buyer should be provided a copy for their permanent records.

Certificate of Burial Rights

A Certificate of Burial Rights is issued to an individual and grants the right of burial via interment, inurnment, or entombment in a specific grave, niche or crypt. It has sometimes been referred to as a deed, easement, or lot certificate. It does not convey ownership of land or other interest in the grave, niche, or crypt to which it refers.

Interment Order

An Interment Order, sometimes referred to as a Funeral Order or Interment Card, is required for interments, inurnments, and entombments, and is originated from the Cemetery office. An Interment Order provides all necessary information regarding location, burial date, deceased, deceased relationship to the grave, crypt, or niche burial right owner, person authorizing burial, and memorialization.

Copies of the Interment Order are generally made available to the funeral director and the person doing the grave opening. The original Interment Order should be filed by last name of the deceased in an alphabetical Interment Order file. A copy should also be placed in the location designation file folder (see Location Record above) for the related location.

The Location Record should also be updated with the new information from the completed Interment Order.

Memorialization Application

If an external memorial dealer is engaged by a family to create a monument or marker a Memorialization Application and approval process should be utilized to insure compliance with the design criteria established by the Cemetery. This application must identify the material including color, dimensions, and inscriptions. A dimensional sketch provided by the memorial dealer showing all inscriptions, designs and lettering that will be included in the final design must be presented.

SALES CONTRACT

The sales contract is the legally binding agreement between the parties for the right to burial in a specific location or a burial service. Sales contracts should be signed by both the buyer and the Cemetery and the buyer should be provided a copy for their permanent records.

Discounts

Discount policies may be considered for active or retired ordained clergy and deacons of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and employees (full or part time) of the parish, their spouses, and children living at home. Recommended discount percentages for each is 20%.

If the purchase is an exchange from an older contract, the discount should only be applicable to the difference between the original and new contract totals.

Installment Sales

The sales contract template provides a payment option for those active cemeteries that choose to allow installment sales of burial rights. If the buyer cannot make payment in full, but has the ability to pay over time, a minimum down payment of 25% is recommended, with remaining payments expected equally each month over an agreed upon time.

A Location Payment Record should be created when a sales contract with installment payments is agreed to. A copy of the original record should be filed with other location records in the location designation file folder. The original Location Payment Record should be filed alphabetically by purchaser and subsequent payments should be indicated on the record when received. Once payment in full has been received the original record should replace the copy maintained in the location designation folder.

If the individual designated to utilize the burial right passes away while the contract is being paid by installment payments, remaining payment in full is expected prior to scheduling the burial. **Burial rights SHOULD not be denied based on the ability to pay. One option could be to make use of relinquished burial rights by designating them for charity purposes for those in need.**

Additional Terms and Conditions

Additional Terms and Conditions typically refers to extra clauses or provisions that are added to a contract beyond the main terms. These additional terms can cover various aspects of the contract and are used to clarify, modify, or supplement the main terms and conditions. Common reasons additional terms and conditions would be included in a contract is to cover specific details, legal compliance, risk allocation, contingencies, and amendments and modifications.

Each sales contract should be accompanied by the Additional Terms and Conditions.

BURIAL RIGHT

A Burial Right or Right of Burial is the privilege of interment, inurnment, or entombment in the Cemetery. It does not convey any right, title or interest in or to the land or structures themselves.

When a person purchases a lot, grave or above ground burial space, the Cemetery retains title to the land and the property. The purchaser acquires the right of burial. Along with the right of burial is the right to place a memorial according to the rules and regulations of the Cemetery. That distinction needs to be made clear. Purchase and ownership documents should clearly refer to burial rights and not spaces or property.

The term "burial right owner" or "owner of a burial right" is defined as any person having a lawful right to the burial in a niche, crypt, lot, grave or part thereof, in a Cemetery, mausoleum or columbarium, and related memorialization. For that reason, a Certificate of Burial Rights is preferable to a deed or easement as a document of ownership rights.

Burial rights SHOULD NOT be denied based on the ability to pay. One option could be to make use of relinquished burial rights by designating them for charity purposes for those in need.

Non-Catholic Burial Right

Many Catholics have non-Catholic family members and the Church does not wish to separate them in death. Therefore, Catholics and their immediate family members, regardless of their faith affiliation, should be welcomed to purchase burial rights at the Cemetery. Family members should include spouse, parents, grandparents, children (biological, adopted, or raised as a son or daughter (e.g., step-children, foster children)), grandchildren, brothers, sisters and their spouses and children.

Who's entitled to burial rights when the owner is deceased?

When sales of burial rights are made, purchasers should be advised to purchase rights for specific persons and designate who has the right to be buried, thus avoiding issues on inherited rights at a later date. However, family situations change and Cemeteries need to be prepared to deal with inherited rights.

In the event of the death of an Owner intestate or the Last Will and Testament does not specifically devise the Burial Right, the right to use the Burial space shall pass to the Owner's family, subject to any authorization documents signed by the Owner and recorded and filed at the Cemetery office during the Owner's lifetime, in the following sequence of inheritance:

1. The surviving spouse of the original Owner of record has a right of Burial in the grave or above ground burial space. This right may be waived at any time, but is not transferable and terminates by divorce or death and burial elsewhere.
2. Jointly to the children of the Owner.
3. After the death of the last child of the Owner, jointly to the grandchildren of the Owner, then to the great-grandchildren, etc.
4. After the death of the last direct descendant of the Owner, jointly to the parents of the Owner.
5. After the death of the last parent of the Owner, jointly to the living brothers and sisters of the Owner.
6. After the death of the last brother or sister of the Owner, jointly to the nephews and nieces of the Owner.
7. After the death of the last nephew or niece of the Owner, jointly to the grandparents of the Owner.
8. After the death of the last grandparent of the Owner, jointly to the uncles and aunts of the Owner.
9. After the death of the last uncle or aunt of the Owner, jointly to the stepchildren of the Owner.
10. After there is no longer any living person who could be classified in any of these groups, the Burial Rights in the area shall be terminated.

If there are Burial Rights remaining, the person(s) inheriting the rights according to the above sequence may designate rights to another person in writing.

Some cautions when determining burial rights

- Possession of the Certificate of Burial Rights does not imply ownership.
- Rights of burial do not pass as residual property in a will. Rights may be passed in a will by a specific devise. The will must specifically name the person(s) and identify the spaces related to the Burial Right be left to the person(s).
- When several persons equally inherit burial rights it becomes difficult at times to determine all the persons, to contact all the persons involved, or to get agreement. In such situations the persons may designate in writing to the Cemetery a person who will represent the heirs.

Additional Burial Rights

Multiple burials in single burial locations may not have been the norm in years past, but it is gaining momentum. If an agreement does not explicitly (or via the location type or similar notation or via the physical construction) state the number of burial rights sold, then it should be assumed that only one burial right per single burial location was conveyed.

To help assure the desires of the purchasers are carried out they could be asked to complete a Permission for an Additional Burial Right form at or subsequent to the time of purchase. This form can be used to limit heirs allowed to be buried in the same location or forbid this from happening.

A number of factors should be considered prior to selling additional burial rights including:

- Assurance that the person making the purchase request has the legal right to do so. In cases where the request is coming from other than the original burial right owner or their spouse, the sequence of inheritance under "**Who's entitled to burial rights when the owner is deceased?**" above should be followed.
- The physical space limitations of a given burial location. This is particularly critical where a burial has already occurred or in the case of pre-installed lawn crypts, mausoleum crypts or above ground niches where the potential space for additional rights tends to be severely limited.
- The ability to appropriately memorialize all of the deceased who will be buried in the location. The limitations on the number and placement of names/dates in given sections or on mausoleum or niche fronts is an important consideration.

Burial Rights and Memorialization

Burial Rights must be paid in full prior to placing a memorial. Markers and memorials must be approved by Cemetery management for compliance with Cemetery rules prior to placement. Grave markers and upright monuments which are placed on individual graves or on multiple graves may be provided by the person(s) who owns the burial rights. These memorials remain the property of the burial right owner(s) or the persons who are responsible for maintaining them in a safe and proper condition.

Transfer of Burial Rights

The right of burial may be transferred to other persons, indicated in **Non-Catholic Burial Right**, with the permission of the person(s) that owns or inherits via specific devise in a will and the permission of the Cemetery.

The transferring purchaser or heirs should provide the original Certificate of Burial Rights. Transfer authority must be in the form of written request. If the original Burial Right Certificate cannot be obtained a statement to this effect should be included in the written request. The signatures must be notarized to insure their validity and the document kept as a permanent Cemetery record. The transfer information should also be recorded on the Location Record and cross referenced to the transfer file.

A transfer fee should be required and a Transfer Certificate of Burial Rights should be created including the terms, limitations, and conditions of the transfer.

Return of Burial Rights

Cemetery Burial Rights may be returned to the Cemetery by the purchaser or heirs. Burial Rights cannot be sold to a third party for more than they were purchased for from the Cemetery. The purchaser(s) obtains the right of burial for the purchaser, his/her heirs or designees. The Cemetery retains title to the space and therefore has exclusive right to determine who may acquire the burial rights.

Some considerations:

- The purchaser may request the buyback of burial rights and related products and services by completing a Buyback Request Letter. The Cemetery cannot pay the purchaser(s) or heirs more than the original purchase price of the burial rights. Cemeteries may keep a portion of what was paid as an administrative or relinquishment fee. Prior acknowledgment via either Sales Contract and/or Rules & Regulations are a prerequisite. A returned Burial Right should be re-priced at the current price of burial rights for future sale.
- If the return is for donation as a future charity grave, the donor should consult with their income tax advisor if considering taking a related charitable deduction for income tax purposes.

Relinquishment of Burial Rights

An heir to a deceased person may relinquish their rights to be buried in the Cemetery. Examples may include to allow someone else in the line of heirship or the spouse of an heir to utilize their right. All heirs to the deceased rights, at the top of the line of heirship, must simultaneously relinquish their rights by submitting a Burial Right Relinquishment Letter.

Consent

An heir to a deceased person buried in the Cemetery may consent to allow something to happen related to the burial location of the deceased. Examples may include allowing someone else a right to be buried in the location with the deceased, and/or to change or replace the existing memorialization of the deceased. All heirs to the deceased, at the top of the line of heirship, must simultaneously agree by submitting a Consent Letter.

Irrevocable Burial Arrangements

On occasion a person, or their legal representative, who has made prepaid burial arrangements, may request that the arrangements be established as Irrevocable. This request often comes when the person is receiving government sponsored benefits.

The requestor should be required to put the request in writing. Once the written request is received the Cemetery should provide a Statement of Irrevocability and Acknowledgement to the requestor. The requestor must sign the statement and return the original to the Cemetery. The statement should be filed with the location record and the fact that the arrangements are irrevocable should be noted on the location record.

This will make the burial arrangement irrevocable and ordinarily it cannot be changed or cancelled or any related payments refunded.

BURIALS

A Cemetery representative is responsible for supervising all burials. If a family intends to witness a burial, a Witnessing Release should be obtained prior to the burial.

Ground Grave Layouts

It is the responsibility of management, to advise the backhoe operator or grave digger of special circumstances such as:

- Previous interments of cremated human remains
- Vaults, etc., which may be infringing within layout
- Utility and drainage lines
- Lot markers, corner markers
- Ground conditions
- Best route of access to site
- Special grave size, such as extra wide

A standard adult-size ground burial location should be 3 feet 6 inches by 10 feet allowing for a grave of 3 feet 4 inches by 8 feet for a vault. These dimensions take into account room for a marker at the head or foot of the grave, depending on the section or area design. Additional considerations may be necessary if the grave is to be of a special size, such as extra wide or for an infant.

All lot number pins (sometimes known as lot number markers) should be uncovered. String lines should be struck along the center of the pins on either the left or right side of the lot and the bottom or upper side of the lot, whichever is closest to the burial location. On lots without corner pins, lines should be struck along the pins closest on either the left or right side and the bottom or upper side.

From the lot strings above measure and strike string lines for the 3 feet 6 inches by 10 feet burial location (sometimes referred to as the Layout). An alternative is to create a template of strong material with outside measurements of 3 feet 6 inches by 10 feet. Start at the lot lines and flip the template until reaching the location to be excavated. Strike string lines for the additional two sides of the location.

The person performing the layout should sign the interment order indicating that the layout has been completed. Whenever possible a second person should sign the interment order indicating they have reviewed and confirmed the layout.

Ground Grave Excavation

All grave excavation must be done by a qualified backhoe operator or grave digger familiar with Cemetery locations and grave layout.

At no time should the operator deviate from the exact measurements set forth by the layout without approval. The 3 feet 4 inches by 8 feet grave should be excavated centered within the sides of the layout, and 2 feet from the end where the marker goes. If the operator has any question as to the location or grave measurement, it should be brought to management's attention before the grave is excavated.

The grave should be squared off and leveled by hand. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires shoring if the depth of the grave exceeds 5 feet. A generally accepted minimum of 18 inches of earth on top of the outer burial container dictates the minimum grave depth, although Ohio requires a minimum of only 12 inches on top. If the burial is to be made on top of the former burial, determination should be made as to the depth of the first burial.

Adequate measures should be taken to prevent damage to lawns, turf, and monuments. During wet ground conditions the backhoe should be set on at least 3, 4 x 8 foot sheets of 3/4 inch plywood or the equivalent in order to protect the lawn beneath it. When soil conditions allow, stabilizers may be pinned down once the backhoe has been properly set up. Whenever possible, cut the sod out of the area where stabilizers will be pinned down. After the grave is excavated, fill in the depression left by the stabilizers and replace the sod. Some Cemeteries remove sod from the grave before excavation and replace it after the interment. All damage to turf should be corrected as soon as possible.

After the grave is excavated, proper planking should be put over the open grave. Never leave a grave uncovered while it is unattended. Any flowers, wreaths, or grave decorations removed in order to gain access to the grave site should be replaced as soon as possible. Any damage to surrounding graves or memorials during grave excavation should be noted immediately so that damage can be corrected as soon as possible.

Interment

An interment is the burial of human remains (not cremated) below ground, beneath the earth. In most cases, burial requires the human remains to arrive at the Cemetery in a casket. A burial vault is placed in the ground before burial. The purpose of the burial vault is to prevent the ground from caving in as the casket deteriorates over time. The casket should be lowered into the burial vault, then the vault lid is placed and sealed.

Charity Burial

A family of a deceased may claim they are in significant financial difficulty. In this case, the family should obtain a letter from the pastor verifying the financial need, indicating any assistance available from extended family, and making the request for a free or reduced cost burial (and burial right if necessary). **Burial rights SHOULD NOT be denied based on the ability to pay. One option could be to make use of relinquished burial rights by designating them for charity purposes for those in need.**

Although burial vaults are required for interments, if the funeral director cannot assist in providing a vault, a sealed casket should be required.

Infant Burial

Whenever possible infant burial packages should be provided free of charge.

Infant burial packages are provided free of charge by Gate of Heaven Cemetery, in Montgomery, Ohio.

Inurnment

An Inurnment is the placement of cremated human remains in an urn and placement of the urn in a niche, grave, crypt, or other suitable location in a Cemetery.

Due to the minimal size of cremated remains, it is important to track the movement once the remains arrive at the Cemetery with a Cremated Remains Chain of Custody Form. The form includes basic information of deceased name, burial location, and the scheduled inurnment date. Most importantly it includes information related to the cremated remains arrival and storage.

Good practice includes accepting cremated remains only after the sales contract is paid in full and the inurnment service has been scheduled. This will limit the length of storage at the Cemetery.

Cremated Remains Ground Burial

Cremated remains to be buried in the ground should be buried in a cremation vault unless the selected urn is designed to be an urn/vault combination. If the burial is to be made on top of a former burial, determination should be made as to the depth of the first burial. A generally accepted minimum of 12 inches of earth on top of the cremation vault dictates the minimum grave depth.

Name Tag

A name tag should be prepared showing the deceased's name and the burial location for each deceased. The name tags should be affixed on top of the casket or at the top of the urn. If a cremation vault is used a name tag should be affixed on top of it as well. Use of a "Dymo" label maker is recommended.

Ground Grave Inspection and Tent Setup

It is important that management and/or the contractor inspect the grave and ensure it is in the proper condition for the interment. All ground water in a grave should be pumped out. If a minor cave-in has occurred, the grave may need to be cleaned out via backhoe, and/or leveled by hand. It is important that the vault be placed squarely and evenly within the boundaries of the original grave layout.

Once the grave is inspected a canvas tent may then be placed, positioned so that the pall bearers have proper access to the grave. Any metal stakes should be covered with vinyl covers and any excess rope properly looped onto the taut section of rope coming from the tent to the stake. In cold, windy and rainy conditions and to shield mourners from traffic noise or other distractions, the canvas back and sides may be pinned. Under windy conditions or a threat of lightening, tents should not be used. A mat should be placed at the road edge to indicate where the funeral will enter the section.

The contractor must place the required planking, plywood, greens and mats to insure the safety of the mourners. The lowering device is to be tightened and rollers evenly placed. The crank for the device should be placed where it is readily available to the interment crew. Safety bars and straps must also be placed on the device at this time.

When a dirt pile is left at the grave site:

- Plywood or other suitable cover should be placed on the existing turf before the dirt pile is started
- OSHA mandates that the dirt pile be a minimum of two (2) feet from the edge of the grave. If soil conditions are unstable, extra room should be left to prevent collapsing the side of the grave.
- The dirt should be covered with an artificial turf (greens) or dirt mound cover
- Flowers may be placed around the dirt mound or other areas of the grave setup

Grave Backfill

Proper backfill or placement of soil in a grave after the burial has been made is critical for the appearance, safety, and long-term maintenance of Cemetery grounds. The following guides will help with success and may be expanded as needed to fit the Cemetery's operation and soil type.

- The vault lid should be placed properly on the vault and then soil added slowly so as not to move the vault cover.
- Soil should be added to the grave in increments to allow for proper compaction.
- Each increment or lift should be compacted. A maximum lift of 18 to 24 inches is permissible.
- Gas-powered plate tampers provide even compaction.

Fine sand or screenings should be used around the outside perimeter of the vault and soil to fill any voids. Where soil is extremely poor, imported soil may be used or added to the existing material to improve it.

Niche Inurnment

A Niche Inurnment is the placement of cremated human remains in an urn (or suitable alternative container) and placement of the urn in a columbaria or mausoleum niche.

The niche fronts should be removed and temporarily placed near the niche and the niche should be cleaned of dirt and debris. A niche drape should be placed in front of the niche opening. The urn should be placed in the proper niche location immediately following the committal service. If an urn is already inurned in the niche, the niche opening should never be left unattended.

The inner niche front should be replaced and sealed as soon after the committal service as possible. Caulking should be smooth and even, creating an airtight seal. All outer niche fronts should then be replaced and properly aligned. If a lettered niche front is not available before the end of the day, the crypt front should be lettered with a temporary label giving the deceased's name. Caution: Stickers should not be placed on granite fronts as the glue residue may cause future engraving issues.

Entombment

Entombment is the placement of human remains (not cremated) in an above ground mausoleum crypt.

Caskets placed in a mausoleum should be made of metal including a seal (not of wood or fibrous materials which can expand and/or break open). Casket trays should be considered for required placement under caskets placed in crypts that open to the building exterior. Casket protectors should be considered for required encasement of caskets placed in crypts that open to an interior area of a building.

The crypt front should be removed and temporarily placed near the crypt location. If a casket is already entombed in the crypt, the crypt opening should never be left unattended. The crypt should be swept out and vent and/or drain holes should be knocked out. On crypts with plastic vent plugs, they should be removed and given to the supervisor. A crypt drape should be placed in front of the crypt opening.

A hydraulic lift operated by properly trained personnel should be used for placement of the casket in the third tier and above. All safety devices supplied with the lift should be used. All caskets should be placed in the proper crypt location immediately following the committal service. At no time should a casket or casket in an unsealed crypt be left unattended.

No entombment should be made while the family is present. The funeral director may witness the entombment if requested by the family. The family may return to view the casket in the crypt before it is sealed.

All crypts should be sealed as soon after committal services as possible using the inner crypt front. Caulking should be smooth and even, creating an airtight seal. All outer crypt fronts should be replaced and properly aligned using lead or plastic shims if needed. If a lettered crypt front is not available before the end of the day, the crypt front should be lettered with a temporary label giving the deceased's name.

Disinterment

Disinterment is the recovery of human remains by exhumation, disentombment, or disinurnment. Cemeteries have legal responsibilities that must be upheld when it comes to disinterment. The process must be managed by a licensed funeral director, unless for disinterment and immediate reinterment in the same cemetery. The disinterment can generally only occur for relocation within the same cemetery based on the request of an appropriate family member or based on a court order. The disinterment can otherwise generally only occur based on the request of a spouse or based on a court order.

During a disinterment, the casket will not be opened for the purpose of viewing the remains. Family members will often ask to be present at the time of the disinterment. Natural causes deteriorate human remains and the appearance of the deteriorated body. It is with true consideration for the emotional stress this may place upon the family that this is strongly discouraged. A compromise could be to send a clergy person or a funeral director to witness the disinterment in their place. If family members still wish to be present, a signed release that the Cemetery will be held harmless for any emotional distress caused by the viewing of the disinterment is required.

At the time of disinterment, any and all monuments and headstones pertaining to the body removed from the Cemetery must be taken from the Cemetery.

If the disinterment is a dis-inurnment of cremated remains to be removed from the Cemetery, a Dis-inurnment Acknowledgement should be completed. The Acknowledgment should be signed by the person that made the dis-inurnment request, confirming that the urn with the cremated remains has been returned to the family.

Due to the complexities, the recommended price for a disinterment is 3 times the price of an interment. If for disinterment and immediate reinterment in the same cemetery, there should be a separate charge for the reinterment, similar to an interment.

Correcting Burial in the Wrong Location

The Cemetery has the right to correct any errors, regardless whether the families affected want the correction. In order to make the correction Cemetery management should:

- Notify any families affected of the error discovery and that they will be informed of the scheduling of the disinterment and transfer. Families affected would include the family of the deceased as well as the family of the owner(s) of the original burial right location.
- Schedule the correction with the individual or company that will make the transfer
- Notify the affected families involved of the time scheduled for the transfer. If the affected families want the burial right owner(s) or a family representative to be present, obtain an authorization and liability waiver.
- Families should be discouraged from witnessing the transfer because a host of things could go wrong and cannot be subsequently unseen. If anyone from the families is to be present, be sure to keep them at a safe distance for safety reasons.
- All other procedures pertaining to a burial should then be completed
- Any affected families not represented at the transfer should be notified that the transfer has been completed

MEMORIALIZATION

A Catholic Cemetery is a "sacred place". *The Code of Canon Law*, in canon 1210, states: "*In a sacred place only those things are to be permitted which serve the exercise or promotion of worship, piety and religion. Anything out of harmony with the holiness of the place is forbidden. The Ordinary may however, for individual cases, permit other uses, provided they are not contrary to the sacred character of the place.*" Just as a church is consecrated, so is a Cemetery consecrated by a bishop as "sacred ground" and the persons who hold burials rights in the Cemetery have a responsibility for maintaining the religious character of the Cemetery. The holders of burial rights may erect a memorial subject to the specific rules of the Cemetery.

Individual memorials and memorialization inscriptions should complement the sacred nature of the Cemetery. The Cemetery as a whole, as well as individual memorials, should seek to edify, encourage and build up the body of Christ.

Memorialization application requests are required to insure compliance with the design criteria established by the Cemetery. This application must identify the material including color, dimensions, and inscriptions. A dimensional sketch provided by the memorial dealer showing all inscriptions, designs and lettering that will be included in the final design must be presented.

Cemetery management must review and approve the application design before allowing the memorial to be placed. The design, inscriptions and overall appearance must maintain the sacred nature of the Cemetery and reflect the Church's teaching; anything contrary to the faith is not permitted. The dominant theme must be of a religious nature, as characterized by a

Christian cross or other readily recognized religious theme or symbol. Names should be clearly visible. Designs must be in good taste and should have positive meaning for persons who knew the deceased in his or her lifetime.

The size and shape of a memorial is at the discretion of the Cemetery and the burial right owner. As a general rule the face area of an upright monument should be 15% or less than the surface area of the grave. Ground level markers are generally 24 inches X 12 inches and 4 inches thick. Depending on the material, ground level markers of less than 4 inches in thickness are generally to be avoided because of the probability of breaking if hit by heavy equipment or when being moved.

Monuments and markers should be made of quality granite or bronze. Reputable monument dealers will provide a guarantee on the materials. The Cemetery has the right to require and to receive a guarantee on monuments placed on the property and to refuse permission to place a marker or monument that does not meet its standards. The monument dealer must agree to abide by the rules of the Cemetery and to prepare and set the monument according to the terms of the application by signing the application.

PRIVATE MAUSOLEUMS

Private Mausoleums are permitted in Parish Cemeteries at the discretion of the Pastor or Cemetery Director. Cemeteries must first determine if the Cemetery has a suitable location and/or if a private mausoleum fits the current/future Cemetery plan. Cemeteries that permit Private Mausoleums must have appropriate guidelines.

Design and Construction

A complete construction proposal plan must be submitted to the Cemetery. The design drawings must adequately address facility security and safety. The foundation plan must be submitted and approved by a licensed engineer, a drainage plan (if applicable) should support the project and meet required standards, and no crypt should be permitted below ground level.

The exterior materials must be granite from a familiar manufacturer. Marble, limestone, blue-stone, cement, terra cotta or other soft/synthetic materials are not acceptable. All exterior joints must be raked out and tuck pointed with manufacturer's recommended products.

If the design includes a flat roof, only approved granite should be used and be placed in one piece. All doors, windows, and ventilators (if needed) must meet safety standards.

Footprint

Before a private mausoleum owner is allowed to begin construction, the owner should be sold Burial Rights for the locations where the building will be placed. This should include rights to locations to create a reasonable amount of space around the building to create separation from nearby locations, allow space for moving around the building, and allow for some minimal landscaping approved by the Cemetery.

Contractors Compliance

Contractors cannot work on the property unless they are in compliance with the Contract Policy of the Archdiocese Property Management Office and a current Certificate of Insurance is on file at the Cemetery office for them and any subcontractors. Contractor's work schedules are subject to the approval by the Cemetery and can be modified daily according to burial schedule and area needs. The contractor must comply with, and be governed by, all laws, ordinances, and Cemetery Rules & Regulations and shall pay for all required permits.

Management Rights and Responsibilities

The Cemetery's Rules & Regulations apply similarly to the private mausoleum except where said rule is obviously inappropriate or where specifically removed. Private mausoleums are and remain the property and responsibility of the owner.

The Cemetery must be provided keys to the private mausoleum for maintenance and preparation of interments. The Cemetery reserves the right to enter private mausoleum spaces when damage or failure of casket protection has caused an identifiable problem with the unit. The Cemetery reserves the right to seal mausoleum spaces and/or direct how they shall be sealed properly when entombments are made in a private mausoleum.

The Cemetery should not permit entombments until an entire private mausoleum is paid for in full.

MAINTENANCE

General Care

A general care program should include periodic inspection of buildings and grounds for problems that need improvement. To organize work, most Cemeteries assign their first priority to interments, followed by foundations, maintenance operations, grass cutting, and special projects.

Entrances, exits, and feature areas should be kept neat, clean, and well maintained. If a Cemetery is in an urban location, a high-traffic suburban area, or near a highway, the Cemetery perimeter will require regular attention.

Emptying trash receptacles throughout the Cemetery as often as needed helps maintain an attractive appearance. Keeping roadways and walks free of grass clippings, dirt, and other debris is also fundamental to presenting a well-cared-for image. Periodic clean-up of deteriorated grave decorations and prompt removal of improper decorations enhances the overall appearance of the Cemetery. Fences and/or gates should be inspected annually.

Spring Cleanup/Maintenance Program

A successful spring/summer maintenance program begins with an early grounds clean-up campaign, and continues through backfilling and compacting any winter burial graves and provides a time to restore any turf and shrubs that have died or suffered damage during the winter.

The first major task is removal of winter decorations throughout the Cemetery. It is recommended to post a notice of the removal dates in the Cemetery and should be published in the Parish bulletin and website.

Activities which may need to be addressed for a spring maintenance program include:

- Properly tamp and backfill all recent interment sites.
- Arrange for laying of sod on recent interment sites by taking a sod count. If seeding will be used, cover sites with sufficient top soil and seed and fertilize after tamping and backfilling. Check for the type of grass seed which is most recommended for your soil and sunlight conditions.
- Remove any temporary snow stakes that may have been placed.
- Check for winter damage on existing plants, trees and shrubs.
- Inspect, clean and repair storm drains, catch basins, manhole covers, and sidewalks.
- Clean debris from gutters and roadways.
- Repair any damage to lawns and roadways.
- Lay out and reset memorials as needed.
- Attach foundations and place new memorials.
- Exterior water hydrants, faucets and fountains may be reactivated and checked for proper operation.
- Trash containers, curbs, gates and fencing may need repainting.
- Cemetery buildings should be inspected inside and out and necessary repairs made.
- Cemetery owned mausoleum floors may need to be swept, scrubbed and waxed and crypt fronts, windows and furnishings cleaned.

Bed Maintenance

Tree and shrub beds should be prepared and mulched to a depth of two inches. Preparation consists of loosening the existing layer of topsoil, and amending the soil as required. If organic mulch is present, cultivate the mulch into the top layer of soil, then add a two-inch layer of new mulch. Avoid mounding mulch around plant stems and compacting new mulch. Occasional weeding and loosening mulch will keep plant beds neat throughout the growing season. Use of pre-emergent herbicides with mulch will reduce weeding during the growing season.

When non-organic mulch such as stone chips is used, place landscape fabric between the existing layer of top soil and new mulch. This limits weed and grass growth. Maintaining manicured edges gives a finished appearance, and prevents grass from encroaching into plant beds.

Tree/Shrub Maintenance

Fall is an ideal time for transplanting shrubs and installing new plantings because cooler temperatures and less intense sunlight reduce the shock to newly placed or relocated plantings.

Pruning trees and shrubs throughout the Cemetery is another fall project. Dead or dying trees and shrubs can be eliminated, along with dead wood and overhanging limbs. The ideal time to prune deciduous plantings is after the leaves have fallen.

Periodic inspection and maintenance of mature leaf-bearing trees enhances their appearance, and reduces safety hazards from broken or fallen branches. Regular inspections should include:

- Broken or dead limbs or branches
- Low-hanging branches
- Overgrown tree crown (the crown of a mature tree should be periodically thinned and shaped to allow wind to pass through the tree, and to stimulate new growth)
- Broken or split trees where the main trunk branches off

If any of the above conditions cannot be remedied by Cemetery staff, a professional tree service company could be contracted for consultation or other assistance.

Prompt leaf removal maintains a manicured appearance of the grounds. There are several machines available which can vacuum and mulch leaves. Commercial mowing equipment is also very effective at mulching leaves until significant accumulation builds up. Once the leaves are mulched they are an excellent source of compost. If leaves are removed by hand, they can be raked into a large canvas or plastic tarp for efficient cleanup. The tarp can be lifted and the contents dumped into a truck or trailer.

Turf Maintenance

Characteristics of a successful turf maintenance program involve specific preparations best performed in the fall or during cooler weather. A late season mowing aids leaf removal and delays the first spring mowing so that time may be spent cleaning the Cemetery. In late winter or early spring, it may be desirable to apply a pre-emergent herbicide to lawns that have a heavy concentration of dandelions or crabgrass. A post-emergent herbicide can then be used where needed in spring, summer and fall to control undesirable broadleaf weeds. This application limits dandelions and other broadleaf weeds that appear during hectic pre-Memorial Day Cemetery preparations.

Some areas of the Cemetery may be in need of fertilization. Granular fertilizer, with a minimum 50% organic base, works well. Lawns can be fertilized in early spring to promote green-up, or in early May to provide nutrients needed to survive summer conditions. If you are only able to fertilize once a year, fall is generally preferred. Not only is fall the most beneficial time for fertilizing turf, but the resulting growth won't add to the spring growth causing a mowing challenge.

Where feasible, a fall program of over seeding is also recommended to improve weak turf areas before winter decorations are placed. This program supplements spring sodding and seeding. Sodding and seeding in the cooler months helps establish a root system before grass cutting resumes, reducing damage to new turf caused by equipment. Preparing the soil by thoroughly loosening, leveling and raking it before applying seed and laying sod will ensure a successful planting.

If watering selected turf areas is warranted and feasible, it is better to water thoroughly twice a week than to water briefly every day. To be effective, water should penetrate soil crust to reach the root zone. Early morning watering, rather than late evening irrigation, will prevent root rot and other fungal infections.

Equipment Maintenance

The maintenance program should include a complete inventory of all equipment, along with ordering any needed repairs, parts, filters, belts and blades. Repairs may be completed by Cemetery staff or arranged through a reliable dealer or specialized mechanic.

An equipment evaluation is advisable. The following are some of the considerations when deciding whether to maintain existing equipment or replace it:

- Is this equipment the most efficient means of completing the assigned task?
- Have repair costs been reasonable over the last few years?
- Are parts readily available?
- Is the machinery safe?

Equipment storage is particularly important for machines with batteries and water-cooled systems. If this equipment will not be used for an extended time period, remove batteries. To preserve a battery charge, place it on slow charge at least every two weeks. If the equipment may be used periodically during the off-season, check antifreeze requirements. All vehicles need winter preparation; this includes tune-ups, oil and filter changes, and other routine maintenance. Antifreeze levels should be checked, and fluid added or replaced as needed. Prior to the first snowfall, snow plows and snow throwers should be checked for proper operation; snow chains inventoried and made readily available; and snow tires installed where required.

Other Projects

Other projects to be considered are painting of Cemetery buildings, cleaning storm drains and straightening and aligning memorials. A pre-winter inspection of all Cemetery buildings will identify problems that need correction.

Specific items to check and repair as needed are:

- Heating and air conditioning operations
- Gutter and down spout condition
- Roof drain condition
- Roof and flashing condition
- Exterior lights, timers, and photo cells
- All locks

Landscaping

Attractive landscaping can transform a well-kept Cemetery into a place of beauty and tranquility. Careful planning, plant selection, and grouping can enhance the Cemetery's natural terrain, as well as its manmade features. Cemetery landscaping involves arranging or modifying natural scenery to provide the best religious and aesthetic effect, considering the eventual use of the land.

Landscape design considerations include:

- Preserving and enhancing the Cemeteries sacred character
- Maintaining a sense of order and beauty
- Providing economy in future maintenance
- Following nature's lead
- Establishing a focal point and building the landscape design around it
- Selecting plantings, whether formal or informal, for initial and future appearance
- Allowing for the most efficient use of space
- Considering geographical location, topography, and soil conditions
- Distributing trees and shrubs judiciously
- Varying and blending colors attractively
- Including annuals/perennials/ornamental grasses for color and texture
- Considering any local animal browsing (deer, rabbits, etc.)

Tree selection depends on the desired effect. Shade trees take up more space than small ornamental trees. When planting in sections, reserve at least four grave spaces around each shade tree. Consider future tree size, root structures, and fall leaf clean-up when selecting quantity and type.

Consider where trees will most enhance the beauty of the Cemetery and present the most natural appearance. Trees need not be confined to walkways or other areas unsuitable for graves. Evergreens provide excellent wind barriers and screening along fences. Allow room for growth and keep them trimmed away from fences and power lines.

Consider growing conditions and eventual maintenance requirements when selecting shrubs, since pruning and weeding can be expensive and time-consuming. Use shrubs as screening around structures, features, and entrances.

Annual or perennial flowers can add highlights of color to the Cemetery landscape. However, because these plants require considerable maintenance, limited, strategic use may be desirable.

Landscape Maintenance

The well-kept appearance of the Cemetery is a positive force in marketing the Cemetery and reinforcing for families that we care about their loved ones left in our care.

Landscape maintenance often falls to low-priority status, though it is the task that most directly affects the Cemetery's overall appearance. Keeping lawns, gardens, shrubs and trees in top condition enhances the Cemetery's grace, and provides an environment that fosters prayerful remembrance. Regular care guarantees that the Cemetery's landscaped grounds retain their appearance throughout the year.

Mausoleum Maintenance

There are three (3) main problems which may exist within crypt chambers. These problems are *bodily fluid leakage, decomposition odors, and infestation*. These problems demand a broad integrated system of controls.

- Provide proper drainage and landscaping; prohibit visitor placement of fresh flowers; perform proper clean up; and control temperature and humidity
- Include seals and screens to prevent insects from getting into areas where they can breed
- Apply dust or liquid pesticides to crypt interior areas to reduce infestation
- Monitor the potential multiplying of insects

Cemetery staff should be alert for odors and staining and report observations to management.

GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

General Cemetery Rules

For a cemetery to operate with the least amount of challenges, management must establish rules. Without rules and the consistent enforcement of rules, the operations of a cemetery may become chaotic. Though diocesan employees in the Chancery or administrative offices may not be involved in the day to day operations of cemeteries, it is important for them to be aware of cemetery rules. Often, patrons who are unhappy about a rule will call or write to the diocesan offices. It is important to support the management teams of diocesan cemeteries, so diocesan staff must be aware of the rules cemetery managers are enforcing. Following are some examples of cemetery rules.

The size and shape of monuments must be controlled. In some cemeteries only flush markers are allowed in certain areas. This greatly reduces the maintenance costs of the Cemetery since flush markers are monuments that are level with the ground surface. The Cemetery rules will not permit upright monuments to be placed on a grave designated for flush markers only. Cemetery rules may also limit the height and base size of monuments. This may serve a practical purpose such as allowing adequate space for mowers to maneuver between the upright monuments, but it also serves to protect the aesthetic aspect of the Cemetery.

The placement of the monument on the grave must be regulated. The Cemetery rules should specify the placement of monuments on graves to maintain uniformity throughout the Cemetery. The Cemetery can control this by requesting that the patrons use the Cemetery staff, rather than a monument company, to set the foundation for the monument. Since the monuments belong to the heirs, the Cemetery cannot insist upon its staff installing the monuments, but the Cemetery may impose an inspection fee to ensure the proper installation. The inspection fee will usually convince the patrons to use Cemetery staff.

It is the responsibility of management to ensure appropriate monument symbols and wording. In some cemeteries, management may rely on a committee or a priest appointed by the Archbishop, Pastor, or Cemetery Director to serve as a “gate keeper” for monument symbols.

The Cemetery will want to determine what objects can and cannot be placed on graves. A popular item patrons like to use to decorate graves are shepherd hooks. Shepherd hooks are fabricated metal wires in which one end is inserted into the ground and the other end is curved to hold objects such as baskets or bird feeders. Cemeteries often find shepherd hooks to be maintenance problems during mowing and weed trimming and they pose a safety hazard for the maintenance crew. Further, bird feeders contain bird seed which consists of a variety of seeds such as sunflower seeds and thistle seeds. Thistle, if it takes root, produces prickly flowers and leaves and is considered a nuisance for cemeteries. Cemetery management should decide whether to allow shepherd hooks along with the objects hung on the hooks.

It is important to establish visitation hours for cemeteries. The hours should be set seasonally, that is, longer hours in the summer and shorter hours in the winter. There is generally no valid reason that patrons should be on Cemetery grounds after dark. It would add costs to provide adequate lighting for patrons to be on Cemetery grounds after dark, and there is no valid reason to incur such an expense. The Cemetery management should inform the local police of the standard visiting hours so that the police could investigate any off hours activities they spot during routine patrols.

Another challenge which cemetery managers face is the problem of damage and loss to private property placed on the graves. Unfortunately, vandals find cemeteries to be fertile grounds for their mischievous and damaging activities. It is important to remember that monuments belong to the heirs of the deceased unless the Cemetery maintains ownership of the monuments and sells a "right to use" the monument as do a few cemeteries. If a monument is knocked over, broken, spray painted, or damaged in some other manner, it is generally not the responsibility of the Cemetery to remedy the incident. If a monument is damaged by vandals, Cemetery management should attempt to contact the heirs to explain the incident. Cemetery management should also remind the heirs that it is their responsibility, not that of the Cemetery, to remedy the situation. Cemetery management should encourage the affected patron to check their homeowner's policy to determine whether the loss is covered under the policy as some of the premier plans do. In some cases, there may be no heirs, or there is no contact information available for the heirs. The Cemetery management will need to make a decision regarding damage to monuments in those cases. If a monument is tipped on its side, it is usually rather easy for Cemetery maintenance staff to right the monument. If the monument is badly damaged or defaced, the Cemetery management must decide whether allowing the monument to remain in its damaged condition would be detrimental to the Cemetery as a whole. The Cemetery may choose to repair, replace, or remove the monument.

Another loss scenario for cemeteries is stolen or legitimately removed items that were placed on graves. Some patrons will place expensive bronze vases on graves for which to place fresh flowers. When bronze prices spike, cemeteries find that villains will steal the bronze vases and sell them for the scrap value. The Cemetery is not responsible for lost or stolen items and that should be made clear to the heirs. Sometimes, though, the Cemetery maintenance staff must remove items from the grave that are either hazardous, unsightly, or in violation of Cemetery rules. If possible, the Cemetery staff should warehouse the items for a reasonable period in case the patron would like the item returned.

OHIO SPECIFIC RULES AND REGULATIONS

Cemetery Registration

No person, church, religious society, established fraternal organization, or political subdivision of the state shall own, operate, or maintain a cemetery unless it is registered with the Ohio Division of Real Estate and Professional Licensing. A cemetery in which no interments have occurred in the last 25 years is exempt.

Ohio Cemetery Dispute Resolution Commission

A nine-member commission that assists in resolving complaints against registered cemeteries using informal techniques of mediation. The commission operates under ORC Chapter 4767.

Decoration Policies

What are permitted decorations?

- Live flowers, artificial flowers
- Vases, solar lights, shepherd's hooks, edging, etc.
- Plantings

What will be done with unauthorized decorations? What areas around the grave can be decorated? What are the spring clean-up and mowing season policies?

Cemetery Rules and Regulations

Your Cemetery's rules and regulations are the guidelines (foundation) by which your Cemetery should be operated. They should be as specific as possible and reflect your operation practices as well as the overall appearance of your grounds.

- Hours of operation
- Decoration policies
- Monument restrictions
- Responsibility for damaged monuments
- Burial rights control and transfer
- Speed limit
- Visitor conduct

Provide notice of any updated rules and regulations and enforce them.

Online Posting

- Requirements and fees
- Rules and regulations
- Overview and section maps

Policies and Procedures

Written policies and procedures that pertain to daily operations and accompany the rules and regulations.

- Burial days and times restrictions
- Disinterment procedures
- Monument placement
- Record retention
- Inquiries

Compliance with the Law

- Cut grass once per month during the growing season
- Trim around markers/monuments three times per year
- Sod or seed graves as necessary within one year of interment
- Remove trash, funeral flowers, and live flowers once a month and artificial flowers once per year
- Maps available identifying graves or lots
- Effective March 19, 2015 newly developed lots should be pinned and burial right owner's names recorded so that locations can be located
- Electronic or paper records maintained in the cemetery office
- Paper records maintained in a fireproof container
- Maintain duplicate paper records off-site, if possible
- Electronic record copies must be true copies of the original documents

Citations and Contacts

ORC Chapter 1721 – Cemetery Associations

<http://codes.ohio.gov/>

Registration and Resolution Chief
Ohio Department of Commerce
Division of Real Estate and Professional Licensing
77 South High Street, 20th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6133
Phone: 614-466-5384
Fax: 614-220-7103
www.com.ohio.gov/real

QUESTIONS

For additional questions:

Gate of Heaven Cemetery
11000 Montgomery Road
Cincinnati, OH 45249
513-489-0300