



Town of Stow, MA  
CEMETERY DEPARTMENT  
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## **TOWN OF STOW, MA – CEMETERY REGULATIONS**

- 4A. Authorization
- 4B. General Guidelines and Uses
- 4C. Regulations for Tradition and Natural Burials
- 4D. Regulations for Monuments, Flat Markers, and Planting & Decorations

### **AUTHORIZATION**

1. The Cemetery Committee reports to the Select Board Members and the Town Administrator.
2. The Cemetery Committee oversees the administrative, management, and maintenance upkeep of the Town's Cemeteries, known as Brookside, Lower Village and Hillside.
3. The Cemetery Committee reserves the right to revise and or amend the General Guidelines and Uses, or the Rules and Regulation.
4. The Cemetery Committee shall have the authority in their judgement any activity that is detrimental to the safety of the public and town employees.
5. The Cemetery Committee gives the Superintendent direct charge of the cemeteries under his or her care, and is empowered, authorized, and required with or without the intervention of the Cemetery Committee to enforce the General Guidelines and Uses, and Regulations for Burials.
6. The Cemetery Committee, with the Superintendent understands the importance of using sustainable ground practices. Such as mowing practices, Battery powered equipment, Reuse and repurpose materials, as we are becoming a more carbon-neutral organization.
7. No work is to be done on Cemetery Property or Gravesites without authorization or permission from the Cemetery Committee, or the Superintendent.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES AND USES**

Office Hours of Operation are 6:30am until 2:30pm.

Cemetery Visitation Hours are Sunrise to Sunset

The said lots shall not be used for any other purpose than as a place of burial for the human remains.

1. In order to purchase a plot/s you must be a resident of Stow or seek approval from the Cemetery Committee for admission.
2. Lot(s) shall not be sold to an association, group, or organization.
3. The superintendent shall have direct charge in their opinion when it becomes necessary for the maintenance and improvement of the cemetery.
4. The Cemetery Department has the right to remove and discard any plantings, figurines, ornamental displays, or memorials of a permanent nature.
5. All seasonal decorations, boxes, markers, plantings, trees, wreaths, or any other temporary arrangements and their containers will be removed by the first day of April.
6. The Cemetery is not responsible for lost or stolen property. Nor damage to containers, plantings caused by any routine maintenance of trimming, mowing, snow blowing, plowing, and burial procedures.
7. No crushed stone, glass containers, fences, curbing, urns, or any signs are allowed.
8. Any vandalism and theft, defacing, injury to or marking of any monument, trucks, equipment, or structures, shall be punishable by law.
9. The proprietor may have an upright monument with the following restriction. Two plots minimum, the base is 3ft. long 1ft. wide the upright marker is 2ft. high total height not to exceed 3 ft. high.
10. A proprietor/ family may plant flowers and or perennials in front of the upright monument. The bed should not exceed 1 foot from the monument. Nothing is to be placed on the sides or the back of the upright monument.
11. A proprietor/ family may plant flowers, perennials or put flowers into proper containers above the ground and behind the flat markers but the plantings should not exceed 1 foot from the marker.
12. The Cemetery Committee urges the public to follow a common courtesy clause of carry in/carry out policy of all materials brought into the Cemetery property.
13. The trash receptacles are for natural material, such as grass clippings, edging and dead plant material, (not) household rubbish or any travel items from your vehicles. This includes plastic bottles, cups, cans, glass, and paper products.
14. Dogs will be allowed in the Cemeteries. The Cemetery Committee encourage dogs to be on a leash but are not necessary. Owners or keepers are responsible and should have voice control of the dog/s or be placed on a leash. Dog waste/poop should be picked up and taken from the Cemetery properties. For health and safety reasons, dog waste should never be placed in the trash receptacles. The Town of Stow nor the Cemetery Committee or Cemetery Department employees are not responsible for any At Large, Nuisance, or Dangerous Dog/s or Animals on Cemetery properties. The provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 140, Sections 157 and 158.
15. Permission for gravestone rubbing must be obtained from the Committee Members or the Superintendent.

16. Cemetery personnel have the authority to enforce all Guidelines, Regulations or Restrictions.

### **REGULATIONS FOR BURIALS**

Tradition Burial are a full burial with a casket, a concrete vault with a one-piece cover.

1. There will be no interments on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Patriots Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.
2. There will be no interments on Sundays.
3. Saturday burials will incur an additional fee to cover overtime rates for employees.
4. No grave shall be opened for interment or disinterment by any person not in the employment of the Cemetery Department.
5. The right to be granted to the deed holder, owner, or family member of any lot or grave is sole and exclusive right of burial. The premises in which such rights are granted shall be used only for the purposes of a place of burial for human remains.
6. The proprietors of rights of burial in the cemeteries or their heirs, shall not grant, sell, alienate, or convey the said executive of burial to a person or persons without having obtained written approval and or consent of the Cemetery Committee, but it shall be optional with the Committee to grant or withhold such approval and consent.
7. All burials shall be under the personal charge of the Superintendent of Cemeteries. No interments shall be made until the Superintendent shall have been furnished with a permit as required by law of the Commonwealth; also, an order from the owner or legal representative of the right of burial in the lot in which the interment is to be made.
8. Any outstanding obligations due the Town, must be paid before the grave is opened.
9. The Cemetery Department and the Superintendent reserve the right to correct any errors that may be made by said same, either in making interments, disinterment, or removals and shall not be held liable due to the failure of any devices to operate normally, or conditions beyond our control.
10. The Cemetery Department shall not be held responsible for any order given or mistake occurring, due to lack of precise and proper information or instructions as to the particular size, space and location in a lot where an interment or disinterment is desired.
11. All full interment remains will be placed in a concrete vault with a one-piece cover sufficient to permanently support the heavy weights above ground.

## **REGULATIONS FOR MONUMENTS, FLAT MARKERS, PLANTING & DECORATIONS**

1. No Monuments or Markers will be placed without notifying the Cemetery Committee or Superintendent prior to the date of placement.
2. All Monuments and Flat Markers should include a drawing or sketch be approved by the Cemetery Committee before any work is accepted by a company representing a family.
3. Upright monuments will include the dimensions with a base of 3 feet long, 1 foot wide, with the upright stone portion including the base is not to exceed 3 feet tall.
4. The placement of all Monuments and Flat markers will be determined and marked out by the Superintendent.
5. Standard Flat Markers are not to exceed 12 inches wide, 3 feet long, and 4 inches thick.
6. Military Flat Markers (Bronze or Granite) will be installed at no cost to the family.
7. Planting of flowers and perennial allowed in ground or in pots with some restrictions.
8. Donation are accepted, placing of trees are at the discretion of the Committee and the Superintendent.
9. There is no planting of trees or shrubs at gravesites.
10. Monument planting is front and the length of the base and 1 foot out from the base.
11. Flat Marker planting is in front or behind the marker, but both – and never to exceed 1 foot from marker.
12. Seasonal planting is accepted as are holiday pots/wreaths.
13. No low-growing, creeping perennials.
14. Graveside decorations should be tasteful, appropriate, and not affecting others place of sanctuary.
15. **The Cemetery Department reserves the right to remove all decorations and or plantings that is found to be distracting, distasteful, disrespectful, or interferes with routine upkeep of the Town Cemeteries.**

## **REGULATIONS FOR NATURAL BURIALS**

1. The Stow Cemetery Department will offer natural burial services upon request.
2. All natural burials which require that everything going into the ground is biodegradable is welcome.
3. A licensed Funeral Director shall oversee all natural burials to ensure that all Massachusetts Regulations pertaining to the handling and transportation of bodies are followed.
4. All bodies will use a biodegradable container. A simple wooden casket with wooden dowels, wicker, bamboo, and other natural materials. They must be free of toxic paint, varnishes, and glues. A shroud may be used but placed in a biodegradable container.
5. Regardless of the time frame, Stow Cemetery will not accept any body if the outer container, casket or shroud, shows any signs of bodily fluids.
6. Excavating equipment will be used for the interment and back filling of gravesites.
7. For safety concerns a lowering device will be used. If needed a brick or a piece of soft wood will be placed in the grave. To remove the straps of the lowering device.
8. All Natural Burials in Extension 2 Section 3 and will have a concrete vaults. The option to have an open bottom vault and fill the inside with loam and other natural material will be on request from the family or funeral director. The concrete vault cover will be placed onto the vault bottom. Any other areas other than designate natural burials will have concrete vaults
9. These ruling are for safety concerns are for the visiting families, the public, vendors, and employees.
10. That any remains of the dead deposited in said lots shall never be removed without the consent of the Cemetery Committee. In the case of a natural burial, remains cannot be exhumed.
11. All general or perpetual care maintenance programs will be under the direct supervision of the Cemetery Department. The Cemetery Committee or Cemetery Employees of the Town of Stow.
12. Natural Burial sites will be maintained in the same fashion as all the Cemeteries in the Town of Stow and are required to follow all other regulations.