

Town of Greenfield, N.H.

Cemetery Definitions and Regulations

Revised 2023

FOREWORD

Cemeteries are a hallowed commemoration to those who have lived and died. It is important that an atmosphere of serenity and beauty greet all who visit. The following regulations are adopted in keeping with that requirement.

If a situation arises that is not covered by these regulations, the Cemetery Trustees shall have the right and responsibility to take whatever action they judge to be correct, reasonable and in the best interests of all.

A: DEFINITIONS:

1. The **Cemetery Trustees** are a group of three individuals elected by ballot to oversee the management of town cemeteries located in Greenfield NH.
2. **Town** shall mean the Town of Greenfield, New Hampshire.
3. A **plot** is an area 40 inches by 120 inches, designed to accommodate the full body interment of one adult, or three separate cremains spaces.
4. A **lot** shall mean an area that extends 10 feet (120") in the direction of a row and 10 feet deep.
5. A **cremains space** is one third the size of a plot (40" X 40").
6. **Interment** shall mean the permanent disposition by burial of the remains or ashes (cremains) of a deceased person.
7. A **monument** shall mean a headstone, gravestone, or any memorial made of durable material, that extends above the ground.
8. A **marker** shall mean any stone or metal plaque placed flush with the ground.
9. **Corner markers** are stones which are installed by a monument company to indicate the corners of a lot or plot.
10. A **deed holder** is the person(s) who purchase(s) interment rights for themselves and anyone designated by them to be interred in a specific lot or plot.

B: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. The Greenfield NH Cemetery Trustees have adopted the following Regulations for the mutual protection of all lots, deed holders, and visitors in town-owned cemeteries. All lots, deed holders, and visitors to Greenfield cemeteries are subject to these Regulations.
2. The Cemetery Trustees reserve the right to change and/or repeal these Regulations whenever the best interests of the town, deed holders, and cemeteries might demand. Unless specific exemptions are noted, such changes shall apply to all lots, deeds, and deed holders, no matter when deeds were issued. Once adopted by the Cemetery Trustees, these Regulations shall supersede any previous versions.

3. Whenever revised Regulations are adopted, every reasonable effort will be made to inform current deed holders, visitors, and town residents of the changes. To that end, all deed holders should notify the Cemetery Trustees whenever there are changes of contact information. The Cemetery Trustees shall not be responsible for any returned correspondence if they have not been supplied with up-to-date contact information.
4. The Cemetery Trustees are responsible for all town-owned cemetery grounds and for all activities within the cemeteries, including the conduct of funerals and/or commitment/dedication ceremonies. The Cemetery Trustees shall have the right to enforce these Regulations and to exclude from all town cemeteries any person(s) who may violate them.
5. In the case of any situation that is not covered by these Regulations, the Cemetery Trustees shall have the right and responsibility to take whatever action they deem to be correct, reasonable, and in the best interest of all parties.
6. Any question regarding policy shall be decided by a majority vote of the Cemetery Trustees.

C: DEEDS TO INTERMENT LOTS

1. Lots or plots can only be purchased by residents of Greenfield or by individuals with ties to Greenfield, as determined by the Cemetery Trustees. That purchase allows and permits the burial of the dead and the placement of suitable markers and monuments. However, the town retains the ownership of the property defined by the deed. Each burial place is identified first by the number of the row and then by the number of the lot.
2. Partial lots (single graves) are limited in number and location. These will be defined by the Cemetery Trustees as required.
3. Purchase of more than two contiguous lots must be approved by the Cemetery Trustees.
4. A deed will be issued only after the appropriate fee has been paid in full, and the transaction has been approved by the Greenfield Select Board.
5. An **additional** fee of \$200 is required at time of purchase for the engraving and installation of four corner markers, in order to ensure the proper marking of the pertinent lot(s). For custom corner markers, see #6.
6. Corner stones must be installed within 30 days of lot purchase, unless this is prevented by snow cover. In that case, they must be installed within 30 days of cemetery reopening in the following year. The corner markers will be of a default design unless the lot purchaser desires a custom design. Custom marker costs exceeding \$200.00 will be the responsibility of the purchaser.
7. A deed holder may transfer a deed to another person only if such transfer is recorded by the Cemetery Trustees and properly filed with the Town Clerk.
8. A deed holder may return to the Town the deed for a lot in which no burials have been made. In such instance, the Town will buy back the deed for its original purchase price.
9. If a deed holder dies intestate, or if no provision is made in their will for disposition of the lot upon their death, their interest in such lot shall descend in accordance with the laws of the State of New Hampshire.

D: MONUMENTS AND MARKERS

1. All monuments, markers and corner stones must be made of a suitable and durable natural stone, which is impervious to disintegration, erosion, or corrosion.
2. No burials of any kind, or the installation of monuments or markers are permitted by the deed owner or any other non-authorized individual. The Cemetery Trustees and/or their designees must supervise all such activity.
3. A marker or monument inscribed with a name, birth and death date is required at all gravesites and must be installed **no later than one year from the date of burial**.
4. Monuments must be proportional to the size of the lot. A monument on a single grave may be up to 24 inches high. A monument up to 42 inches high may be centered on a 10'-by-10' lot. Placement of any monument over 42 inches high will be considered by the Trustees on a case-by-case basis.
5. Markers shall be no larger than 12" X 24".
6. All monuments must be set on a suitable base that will be stable under frost conditions. The length and width will be proportional to that of the monument and the depth will be a minimum of four feet.
7. Any monument or marker or the inscription on it that is considered improper or offensive by the Trustees will be removed with proper notification to the family or lot owner.

E: INTERMENT

FULL BURIALS

1. Due to the difficulty of locating specific lots/plots when the ground is covered with snow, interments are generally allowed from May 1 through November 30. However, prevailing climatic conditions may allow interments earlier and/or later, contingent upon approval of the Cemetery Trustees.
2. Interments are allowed seven days a week. The cost of full burials is set by the excavation contractor who digs the grave.
3. The Funeral Director must present the appropriate burial transit form to the Cemetery Trustees no later than the date of burial.
4. The Cemetery Trustee chair must enter the required information on the burial transit form regarding the row, lot, and plot in which the remains have been placed. They must then sign the document and submit it to the Town Clerk within 6 days of interment.
5. The burial of the remains of more than one person in one grave is not permitted except in the case of a parent and their infant, no older than one year.
6. Double-deep burials are not permitted.
7. When instructions regarding the location of an interment space in a lot are unavailable or indefinite, or the designated interment space cannot be opened where specified for any reason, the Cemetery Trustees will inform the Funeral Director, who will then consult with the family of the deceased, and a new location will be determined. The Town shall not be liable for any damages which may be incurred.
8. The Cemetery Trustees shall require written instructions (email messages are acceptable) for all interments. The Town shall not be responsible for any order given orally or by telephone, or for any mistake which may arise from the lack of precise and proper instructions as to the particular space, size, and location where interment, disinterment, or removal is desired.
9. If the Town is responsible for any error (a) in an interment, disinterment, or removal, or (b) in the description, transfer, or conveyance of interment property, it reserves the right

to correct such error. In the case of (a), the Town may remove or transfer the interred remains to other property of equal value and similar location. In the case of (b), the Town may cancel the incorrect conveyance and substitute a conveyance for interment property of equal value or, at the Town's sole discretion, it may refund the money paid on account for such purpose.

10. All interments must be in accordance with the laws of the State of New Hampshire as well as with the above Regulations.

CREMATIONS

1. The opening and closing of cremation graves is done by the sexton or by an individual who is designated by the Cemetery Trustees as an alternate. All cremation burials shall be under the supervision of the Cemetery Trustees and/or their designated representative. Cremains may be independently and privately buried by individuals without engaging the services of a funeral director.
2. No cremation grave shall be opened without first presenting a copy of the appropriate cremation certificate to the Cemetery Trustees.
3. The cost of cremation burials is determined by the Cemetery Trustees, according to prevailing rates and conditions.
4. Cremains vessels in excess of 24" in any dimension will require a larger grave and consequently will incur an additional cost.
5. Any cremains vessel which requires the incursion into an abutting cremains space will automatically require the purchase of an additional cremains space.
6. Any cremains vessel which has ever contained toxic, volatile, or hazardous fluid and/or material must be free of any trace of that substance before it is allowed to be buried.
7. Cremains may be either buried in a container of the survivors' choosing (see articles 4 and 5 above) or placed directly in the ground.
8. The location of each cremains burial shall be recorded by the Cemetery Trustees in order to avoid its disturbance in subsequent interments.

F: DISINTERMENT

1. The Cemetery Trustees and their designated representatives shall be the only persons permitted to open graves, with the following two exceptions: a) If the cemetery trustees are directed to make a disinterment by order of a court of competent jurisdiction and a certified copy of this order has been filed with the trustees; and b) When the coroner's office directs the disinterment in order to hold an inquest and has filed with the trustees its signed authorization to release to body to it and its lawful agents. In such case, the disinterment must be made by the coroner's office or its lawful agents. Cemetery staff will not be permitted to assist.

2. Removal of a body or cremains by the heirs so that the plot may be sold for profit to themselves, or removal contrary to the express wish of the original plot owner, is forbidden.
3. If removal is required for any reason, the Town shall not be liable for damage to any casket, burial case, urn, monument, marker, planting, or decoration.
4. See "INTERMENT" for other Regulations that apply to both Interment and Disinterment.
5. All disinterments must be in accordance with the laws of the State of New Hampshire.

G: PLANTINGS AND DECORATIONS

The following Regulations are designed to allow cost-effective and practical maintenance of the cemeteries in Greenfield and to ensure that they are aesthetically pleasing.

1. Grave decorations must be placed in close proximity of a monument so that they do not create a hindrance to mowing and general maintenance of a grave site.
2. No artificial flowers are allowed. Non-compliant articles shall be removed without notice.
3. Planting of shrubs or trees is allowed, but must be coordinated and approved by the Cemetery Trustees or their designated representative.
4. No invasive plant species are allowed. A list of invasive plant species is available at <http://www.agriculture.nh.gov/divisions/plant-industry/invasive-plants.htm>
5. The planting of annuals is permitted and encouraged. However, such plantings must be in-ground. Plastic, wood and other types of pots or containers are discouraged, except on a temporary basis, due to their tendency to deteriorate after long exposure to the elements. All such containers must be removed within two weeks of placement.
6. Annuals that have died for whatever reason shall be removed or, in season, replaced. Seasonal plantings shall be removed by the end of the season.