City of Charlotte
General Services Department
Landscape Management Division

City of Charlotte Cemeteries Operational Guidelines

Document Title: City of Charlotte Cemeteries Operational Guidelines

Authority: Issued under the authority of the City of Charlotte Cemetery Ordinance to establish operational guidelines for the management of municipal cemeteries.

Administered By: City of Charlotte – General Services Department – Landscape Management Division – Cemetery Administration

Applies To: All City of Charlotte municipal cemeteries and cemetery operations

Effective Date: September 1, 2026

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1. Purpose

City of Charlotte cemeteries are places of remembrance, reflection, and respect. The City is committed to maintaining these historic and sacred spaces so that families may honor their loved ones in a peaceful, dignified, and well-maintained environment.

These operational guidelines establish consistent standards for the management of the City's municipal cemeteries. The guidelines address cemetery operations, memorial installations, decorations, events, and other activities to ensure the safety, preservation, and respectful use of cemetery grounds. These guidelines help maintain the dignity and historical integrity of cemetery grounds, ensure safe access for burial operations and maintenance equipment, and preserve the peaceful environment for remembrance

2. Public Nature of City Cemeteries

City of Charlotte cemeteries are public spaces open to families, visitors, and members of the community who wish to pay their respects, visit loved ones, or enjoy the peaceful surroundings.

The City of Charlotte is committed to maintaining cemetery grounds that are safe, clean, peaceful, and respectful. However, because cemeteries are open to the public, the City cannot guarantee that vandalism, property damage, theft, or other incidents will not occur. Visitors are expected to exercise appropriate care and report any suspicious activity or damage to cemetery staff or the appropriate authorities.

Visitor Conduct Expectations

All visitors are required to conduct themselves in a manner that protects the dignity, safety, and peaceful character of the cemetery. The following expectations apply:

- Always maintain quiet and respectful decorum.
- Do not engage in recreational activities or behavior that is inconsistent with the peaceful nature of a cemetery.
- Glass containers are prohibited on cemetery grounds.
- Open fires are strictly prohibited, except where specifically authorized by the City.
- Respect all graves, monuments, landscaping, structures, and cemetery property.
- Do not disturb, damage, move, or deface monuments, memorials, decorations, plantings, or other property.
- Follow all posted cemetery rules, signs, and directions provided by City staff.

These requirements are intended to ensure that City cemeteries remain dignified and welcoming places for everyone. **Visitors who fail to comply with these expectations may be directed to leave the cemetery and may be subject to enforcement or other appropriate action under applicable City rules and law.**

3. Cemetery Safety and Vandalism

The City works in coordination with local law enforcement to help maintain safety within cemetery grounds. Police patrols may occur periodically.

Despite these efforts, the City cannot guarantee that vandalism or theft will not occur.

Liability: The City of Charlotte is not liable for vandalism, theft, or damage to items located within cemetery grounds, including grave markers, monuments, vases, decorations, or other memorial items placed at gravesites.

Suspected vandalism should be reported immediately to cemetery administration so staff can coordinate with law enforcement.

4. Authorized Burials and Interments

All burials within City of Charlotte cemeteries must be coordinated through the cemetery administrative office.

Prohibited activities include unauthorized burial of cremated remains, unauthorized burial of caskets, spreading ashes within cemetery grounds, and burial of pets or animal remains.

If unauthorized cremated remains are discovered, cemetery staff may remove the remains. Unauthorized casket burials may be referred to law enforcement.

5. Grave Space Purchases

Grave spaces within City of Charlotte cemeteries may be purchased through the Cemetery Administration office. Purchase of a grave space grants the buyer interment rights for that specific space and does not constitute ownership of real property.

Eligibility: Grave spaces are available to any member of the public, subject to availability within each cemetery section. The City reserves the right to designate specific sections for particular use types.

Pre-Need Arrangements: Grave spaces may be purchased prior to need (pre-need). Pre-need purchases allow families to select a preferred location and relieve the burden of decision-making during times of grief.

Certificate of Interment Rights: Cemetery administration maintains records; however, families are encouraged to keep copies of all documentation.

Transfer and Relinquishment: Interment rights may be transferred to an eligible party through cemetery administration. The City does not guarantee repurchase or buyback of interment rights once sold. For current pricing, space availability, and pre-need arrangements, contact the Cemetery Administration office.

6. Markers, Monuments, and Vases

Grave spaces within City of Charlotte cemeteries may be purchased through the Cemetery Administration Office, subject to availability and applicable cemetery rules and regulations. The purchase of a grave space provides the purchaser with **interment rights to the designated space** and does not convey ownership of the underlying land or constitute a transfer of real property.

Because City cemeteries are historic properties containing graves and memorials dating from many different periods, requirements for markers, monuments, and vases may vary by cemetery, section, lot, and the existing character of the burial area. Cemetery Administration may establish additional requirements to preserve the historic appearance, orderly arrangement, and integrity of each section.

Grave Markers:
Each grave space may have an appropriate grave marker consistent with the requirements of the cemetery and section. In areas where historic monuments, upright headstones, family monuments, or multiple memorials already exist, additional markers or memorialization may be permitted when consistent with the established character of the section.

Existing Historic Memorials:
The City recognizes that many older cemetery sections contain multiple headstones, upright monuments, family markers, footstones, and other historic memorials associated with individual graves or family burial areas. Existing memorials shall be preserved and maintained in accordance with cemetery regulations. The presence of an existing monument or multiple headstones does not automatically establish a precedent for new installations.

Monuments and Upright Headstones:
Monuments, upright headstones, family memorials, and other permanent structures may be permitted in designated sections where they are consistent with the historic character and established memorial style of that area. Approval is required before any monument or upright headstone is purchased, fabricated, or installed.

Dimensions and Design Approval:
All markers, monuments, headstones, footstones, vases, and related memorial features must meet the cemetery's requirements for size, material, design, placement, and foundation. Cemetery Administration must approve all dimensions and proposed installations in writing prior to purchase or fabrication.

Installation:
All memorial installations must be performed by City cemetery staff or by a qualified monument company with prior written authorization from Cemetery Administration. Installation must not disturb existing graves, monuments, landscaping, drainage systems, trees, utilities, or adjacent burial spaces.

Vases and Floral Receptacles:
Permanent vases or other floral receptacles may be permitted when approved by Cemetery Administration and when their placement is consistent with the requirements of the cemetery and section. Temporary floral arrangements may be subject to additional cemetery rules.

Unauthorized Memorials:
Any marker, monument, headstone, vase, or other memorial installed without the required approval may be removed by the City. The City may also require the responsible party to correct or relocate an installation that does not comply with cemetery requirements.

Installation Fees:
Applicable installation, foundation, inspection, or related fees shall be paid prior to installation. Fees are established by the City and are subject to change annually.

Historic Preservation:
In historic cemetery sections, Cemetery Administration may impose additional requirements regarding the size, material, design, placement, restoration, or replacement of memorials in order to protect the historic character and appearance of the cemetery and preserve its existing collection of headstones and monuments for future generations.

For current pricing, availability, eligibility requirements, transfer procedures, and pre-need arrangements, please contact the **Cemetery Administration Office**.

7. Flagpoles and Flags

Flagpoles may only be installed by City of Charlotte cemetery staff. Private installation is not

permitted. Only the following flags on flagpoles may be displayed:

- United States Flag
- State of North Carolina Flag
- City of Charlotte Flag

Any flags that become worn, damaged, or improperly displayed may be removed or replaced by cemetery staff to preserve the dignity of cemetery grounds.

8. Marker Specifications, Delivery and Holding

Markers delivered prior to installation may be held for up to one year. Installation fees must be paid within one year of delivery.

Markers are stored at the City holding facility located at:
701 Tuckaseegee Road
Charlotte, NC 28208

Markers not installed within one year due to non-payment will be considered abandoned and transferred to a recycling facility for decommissioning.

Purchasing a marker online may offer cost savings; however, families should carefully review the marker's

specifications before placing an order. Some online retailers sell markers that are thinner or constructed differently than those typically provided by monument companies. To improve durability, the City recommends markers that are at least **4 inches thick** and cameos with a **steel backing**. Markers that do not meet these recommended specifications are more vulnerable to damage from routine maintenance activities and natural weather events. The City is **not responsible** for damage to markers less than 4 inches thick or cameos without a steel backing.

9. Flowers and Decorations

City cemeteries conduct seasonal cleanups twice each year in March and October. Flowers and decorations not placed in permanent vases may be removed during these cleanups.

Funeral flowers may remain for up to 30 days after burial.

Items that are unsightly, damaged, deteriorated, or interfere with cemetery maintenance may be removed at any time.

Routine landscape maintenance, including mowing, trimming, leaf removal, and other grounds maintenance activities, occurs regularly throughout the cemetery. Flowers and decorations that are not placed in a permanent vase or otherwise secured in accordance with these guidelines may be displaced, damaged, or removed during normal maintenance activities. While landscape crews exercise reasonable care during maintenance operations, the City of Charlotte cannot guarantee that damage to temporary flowers, decorations, or other personal memorial items will not occur and is not responsible for the repair or replacement of such items.

Prohibited items include fencing or borders, and plantings such as flowers, shrubs, or trees.

10. Events, Photography, and Filming

Written approval from cemetery administration is required prior to hosting organized events, gatherings, or filming within cemetery grounds.

Requests should be submitted at least 4 weeks in advance.

Funeral services always take priority over events. Event organizers must remove all trash and leave the cemetery in the same or better condition than found.

Visiting a loved one's gravesite does not require approval.

11. Hours of Operation

Cemeteries are open to the public 7 days per week during the following hours: Sunrise to Sunset

The Cemetery Office is open Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 3:00PM, appointments preferred – **office phone:**

704-336-2123, **office location:** 701 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte NC 28208

12. Funeral Director and Professional Services Requirements

All licensed funeral service professionals coordinating interments within City of Charlotte cemeteries must comply with the requirements of this section. These requirements supplement — and do not replace — applicable North Carolina state law governing funeral services and burial. Non-compliance may result in suspension of scheduling privileges.

Licensing and Credentials. Funeral homes and funeral directors conducting services at City cemeteries must hold a valid license issued by the North Carolina Board of Funeral Service. Cemetery administration may require proof of current licensure upon request.

Burial Scheduling and Advance Notice. All interment services must be scheduled through the Cemetery Administration office. Requests must be submitted no later than [48] hours in advance of the requested interment time. Expedited requests with less than [24] hours of notice may be accommodated subject to staff availability and may incur an additional fee. Scheduling is available Monday through Friday during regular business hours. Weekend and holiday interments are subject to the policies below.

Required Documentation. Before an interment may be conducted, the funeral home must provide cemetery administration: The City of Charlotte Information Form. The completed form must be received by cemetery staff no later than [24] hours before the scheduled interment.

Grave Opening and Closing. Grave opening and closing operations are performed exclusively by City cemetery staff. Funeral homes, families, and private contractors may not conduct grave opening or closing operations. The funeral home is responsible for confirming the grave space with cemetery administration and family prior to scheduling graveside services. Questions regarding grave preparation, liner placement, or depth should be directed to cemetery administration.

Graveside Service Conduct. Funeral services must conclude within 30 minutes. Tent, seating, and equipment setup must be coordinated in advance with cemetery staff and must not damage turf, adjacent markers, or neighboring gravesites. All funeral home equipment and vehicles must vacate the interment area within one hour of the conclusion of graveside services. Cemetery staff will complete grave closure following funeral home departure.

Weekend Interments. Interment services may be scheduled on weekends. Additional fees apply. Contact cemetery administration for the current weekend fee schedule.

Cremation and Inurnment Services. Cremated remains may be interred within a purchased grave space and are subject to the same scheduling, documentation, and container requirements as casket burials. Scattering of cremated remains within cemetery grounds is prohibited.

Monument and Marker Coordination. Funeral homes coordinating marker or monument orders on behalf of

families must obtain prior written approval from cemetery administration regarding dimensions and placement before placing any order. All installations are subject to the requirements of Section 5 of these guidelines.

Contact Information

City of Charlotte Cemetery Administration

Phone: 704-336-2123

Email: cemetery@charlottenc.gov

Approval

Approved this 1st day of September, 2026.