



Town of Ayer
Regulations for Woodlawn Cemetery

Adopted November 7, 2023

Board of Cemetery Commissioners

Woodlawn Cemetery Regulations

Ayer Department of Public Works (DPW)

25 Brook Street, Ayer, Massachusetts

The purpose of Woodlawn Cemetery is for the burial of human remains. When purchasing cemetery lots you are purchasing the Right to Bury human remains in the cemetery, Not the land itself. Perpetual care is included in the purchase of the lot(s) for maintenance by the DPW. Ownership of the property remains with the Town of Ayer. Visitation may only be from Dawn to Dusk.

1. Purchase of Lots and Burials

- A. Lots may be purchased by past and present residents of Ayer. A resident shall further be defined as an individual or their minor child whose legal residence is maintained in Ayer, is registered to vote in Ayer, or owner of property in Ayer.
- B. Each lot measures 3' wide by 9' long, with the monument inside the lot lines.
- C. The purchaser of the lot(s) will be issued a Deed for the Right of Burial.
- D. Burials – No interments shall take place on Sundays or official Town holidays.
- E. Lots and burial rights may be sold by the owners for no greater than the original purchase price, to their heirs or assigns, to someone in direct line of the family, or to a resident of Ayer. Rights for interment may be transferred or granted only upon approval of the Cemetery Commission.

2. Number of Burials Per Lot

- A. Each Lot may have 1 casket and 1 ash burial, or no casket and a maximum of three (3) ash burials.
- B. All caskets must be contained in a concrete vault.
- C. Ashes may be buried in a ceramic, granite, or metal container (urn) without a concrete; otherwise, they must be in a container inside a concrete vault.
- D. All containers must be approved by the DPW.

3. Perpetual Care

- A. As stated above, a portion of the proceeds from the sale of each grave lot is designated for the Perpetual Care Trust Fund.
- B. The Perpetual Care Trust Fund income does not include the maintenance, repair, or replacement of any monument placed or erected upon any lot.

4. Monuments

- A. Before a monument is installed, the purchaser must obtain a Monument Permit Application from the DPW.
- B. Only one monument, centered at the head of the lot, or group of lots purchased by the same person, is allowed per lot deed, with the exception of military flat markers.
 - a. **Sizes (including the monuments' base)**
 - i. Single Grave Lots: One (1) *upright monument* may not exceed 2' wide x 1' deep x 3' tall. Or a *flat marker*, at ground level, may not exceed 2' wide x 1' deep x 4" thick.
 - ii. Two to Three Grave Lots: One (1) upright monument may be 3' wide x 1' deep x 3.5' tall.
 - iii. Four to Six Grave Lots: One (1) upright monument may be 4' wide by 1.25' deep by 3.5' tall.
 - iv. No benches are allowed.
 - v. Military Flat Markers are 2' x 1' x 4" thick if granite; thinner if bronze. They may be at the foot of the grave of the deceased military person, in addition to an upright monument as a headstone, or at the top of the grave if there is no headstone.
 - b. **Lots for ashes**
 - i. Ashes may have a flat grave marker for each ash burial or one single grave sized upright monument headstone per lot

5. Use of Lots

- A. The lot must be paid in full before any work can be done by any individual.
- B. The placing of memorials or other work may not be done without the approval of the DPW. Written requests for modifications must be submitted to the DPW for approval.
- C. Bark mulch, borders or corner markers, crushed stone, raised lots, wooden structures, etc., are prohibited.

6. Plantings and Artificial Flowers

- A. **During mowing season, April 1 to October 31:** at the time of a burial, or on Memorial Day weekend, real or artificial wreaths, floral arrangements and small, potted plants may be placed on the burial side (FRONT) of the monument, not to exceed 18" in front of the monument, nor the width of the monument; and must be removed within two weeks' time. *Nothing may be placed in back of any monument. All artificial flowers must be placed in a cemetery vase.*
- B. **From November 1 to March 31:** Seasonal potted plants, real or artificial flowers, as stated above, in a vase, or wreaths may be placed in front of the headstone, not to exceed 18", or the width of the headstone and must be

removed two weeks after the holiday. Holiday pots must be removed within two weeks after the holiday. *Nothing may be placed in back of any monument.*

- C. It is prohibited to plant any new shrubs or trees.
- D. Existing shrubs or trees shall not be taller than 24", nor exceed the boundaries of the lot.

7. Decorations and Flags

- A. Only American flags no larger than 12" by 18" are to be displayed.
- B. Banners, metal objects, shepherd's crooks, or solar lights are prohibited.
- C. If, in the opinion of the DPW, any natural or manufactured objects that are deemed unsightly, detrimental, inappropriate, or in keeping with the regulations of Woodlawn Cemetery, the deed holder, heir or representative will be notified to remove said items. These items must be removed within 30 days of the notification. In the event that the DPW is unable to locate the deed holder, heir, or representative of the lot in question within 30 days, the DPW shall have the authority to remove said objects.

8. No implements, waste, trash, or other material shall be left on lots, paths or driveways.

9. Restoration and Alterations

- A. In the event that the DPW must restore a lot to the cemetery regulations, all expenses incurred will be the responsibility of the deed holder.
- B. In the event that the DPW is unable to locate the deed holder, heir, or representative of the lot in question within 30 days, the DPW shall have the authority to make necessary modifications to conform to the regulations.
- C. It is forbidden to alter any avenue or pathway on the grounds.

10. Firearms or other weapons shall not be brought into the cemetery, nor discharged near the cemetery, except as part of a military funeral or Memorial Day Ceremony.

11. The cemetery speed limit is 5 mph.

12. Pets – Pet walking is prohibited, with the exception of service animals.

13. **Damage or Loss** -The Town of Ayer shall not be responsible for any damage or loss of items on the lots, or articles removed from the cemetery for non-conformity.

- 14.** The Town of Ayer has the full discretion to maintain Woodlawn Cemetery with integrity and respect for all those who share this cemetery as their final resting place.

DEFINITIONS Per Massachusetts Government, Public Health. Chapter 114

Burial Right – the right to burial in a grave or lot held by the licensee of the grave or lot; however, the license is not equivalent to title to the property. Burial right to the entire lot of individual grave or rights may be granted or transferred by the licensee with approval of the governing body of the cemetery.

Cemetery – an area of land set aside and dedicated for the final disposition of remains of a deceased person.

Cremation – the process of extreme dehydration and evaporation created with intense heat which reduces the composition of the body to inorganic bone fragments.

Cremated Remains – the final processed substance remains of the reduced composition of the body to inorganic bone fragments.

Decorations – the adornment, ornamentation, embellishment, memorialization, care or beautification of a grave in accordance with rules and regulations established by the governing body of the cemetery.

Flag Etiquette – the requirement that a flag of the United States placed upon a grave to honor a veteran shall not touch the ground and shall not be allowed to remain if torn or faded or beyond a specified time period as determined by regulations of the United States Department of Defense, United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the governing body of the cemetery.

Flag Holders – a device, known also as a commemorative marker, made to hold a flag of the United States which identifies the branch of service during observances honoring military veterans.

Flat Marker – a flush to the ground memorial made of granite or bronze.

Governing Body – the independent managing authority of a cemetery as applied to a national veterans cemetery, state veterans cemetery, municipal cemetery, religious cemetery or private non-profit cemetery.

Grave – a space in a cemetery that allows the burial right of either one or multiple in-ground burials of a deceased person.

Grave Liner – an unsealed durable outer container of two or more pieces in which the casket is placed at time of burial in the earth.

License of Burial – the right given for the use of a specific grave lot.

Lot – a space set aside in a cemetery for several grave spaces.

Monument or Memorial – a traditional upright monument, usually made of granite; a flush-to-the-ground memorial, usually made of bronze or granite (flat marker - as defined above), any of which is used for commemorating the life of a deceased person.

Tomb – a structure known as a receiving tomb/building designed for the temporary storage of a casketed body which is not to be interred immediately.

Traditional Cemetery – a cemetery that allows upright traditional monuments.

Urn – a container to hold cremated remains that is durable and placed in the ground.

Vault – a 2-piece sealed durable outer container, usually made of concrete, in which the casket is placed at the time of burial in the earth for additional protection; provided, however, that such a container may have an inner liner to enhance appearance and sealing ability.