

Diocese of Springfield Cemeteries

SACRED SPACES. FAITHFUL CARE.



Decoration Guidelines

FLORAL TRIBUTES

The cemetery offices maintain burial records to assist families in locating graves for the placement of floral tributes. For families unable to visit graves, tributes are accepted from local florists and assistance with placement is offered. Because of the large number of decorations, most often we cannot contact the family if a decoration is not in keeping with cemetery regulations.

The cemetery rules stipulate what decorations are acceptable. Our practice is to adorn burial spaces with flowers. During the growing and mowing season, only fresh or live flowers may be placed; nothing may be attached to monuments. Cemetery personnel are sensitive to various ethnic customs associated with decoration, especially at the time of death and burial, and will try to accommodate these customs whenever possible. Federal and state laws, insurance regulations and safety concerns, impact what is permitted.

Because the cemeteries are operated under the auspices of the Catholic church, it is important that all recognize that the burial of the dead is only one of the Corporal Works of Mercy. Visiting the sick, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry are also works of mercy that must always be encouraged. These guidelines are only effective if observed by both visitors and employees:

- Only natural flowers are permitted during the growing season. Wire in artificial flower stems is a hazard to power mowers and operators. Before and after the growing season, artificial flowers may be placed in urns and vases.
- Moderation is the norm. Flowers are placed in urns, vases or pots and should be dignified and tasteful. Items taped or wired to the outsides of containers or to monuments will be removed
- When families are large, many may wish to express love by decorating. If family members take turns, everyone's needs are accommodated. Honoring the deceased through other Corporal Works of Mercy, identified earlier, is part of the Catholic tradition and encouraged.
- Safety is important. Items attached to wood or metal stakes are hazardous to visitors and workers. As a general rule, such items will be removed as they are seen. The only exception to this are flags placed during permitted times. Glass is easily broken in the cemetery and becomes a hazard; glass items are removed as soon as they are seen.

Diocese of Springfield Cemeteries

SACRED SPACES. FAITHFUL CARE.

SPECIAL FLORAL TRIBUTES

At times such as birthdays, anniversaries of marriage or death, the cemeteries allow potted natural floral tributes to be placed at individual graves for up to three days. Cemetery office personnel can provide guidance and assistance to meet these special needs throughout the year.

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

Holiday items may be placed three days prior to these holidays and will remain in place seven days following the holiday. Items that are hazardous or do not comply with regulations will be removed. Items that are appropriate to the holiday, if not claimed by the end of the seventh day, will be removed by cemetery staff on the eighth day. Winter decorations [*including Christmas*] may remain in place until Spring clean-up.

Our decoration guidelines help maintain the beauty and dignity of our cemeteries. The seasonal clean-up schedule can be found on the following page.

Diocese of Springfield Cemeteries

SACRED SPACES. FAITHFUL CARE.

Clean Up Schedules

There are five ways in which decorations are usually removed:

MAINTENANCE

Items that are unsightly are removed each week during the growing season.

GENERAL CEMETERY CLEAN-UP

Each year, after March 15th and October 1st, all decorations are removed from the cemeteries. This is done to ensure a thorough cleaning of the properties. Due to the volume of decorations being removed, it is impossible to make provisions to claim items after they have been removed. Therefore, should families desire to retain items, they must be removed prior to the scheduled clean-up dates.

SEASONAL DECORATIONS AFTER HOLIDAYS

Eight days after listed holidays [*except Christmas*] all decorations of a seasonal character are removed if they have not been claimed by families. A certain amount of leeway is afforded families in decorating for holidays, but items that create safety hazards are removed as soon as observed.

DECORATIONS NOT COMPLYING WITH RULES

Cemetery employees work in the various sections of the cemeteries on a regular basis. As part of their responsibilities, they maintain the beauty and safety of the cemeteries. As instructed by the Cemetery Rules and Regulations, to ensure their safety, and the safety of all who visit the cemeteries, they are expected to remove decorations which are not in compliance.

WIND & THEFT

Decorations may also be removed by either of these causes. As it is impossible for employees to be everywhere at all times, the cemeteries cannot assume liability for decorations. When items are blown about, the grounds crew has no choice but to dispose of them as replacement at specific sites is not possible.

Diocese of Springfield Cemeteries

SACRED SPACES. FAITHFUL CARE.

Cemetery Maintenance

Management seeks to maintain the diocesan cemeteries in a fashion that reflects the church's teachings about the dignity of every human person. To that end, the Diocese of Springfield maintains a Cemetery Trust Fund.

The Trust Fund enables the hired staff to maintain the diocesan cemeteries to a uniform standard. Staff responsibilities include the regular mowing of grass, trimming around monuments and memorials, fertilization and weed control.

The Trust Fund also enables the cemetery to seed new graves, repair older graves, level flush memorials, and repair monument foundations as required. Employees will water newly seeded areas to encourage growth of grass. For reasons of uniform beauty as well as safety and insurance concerns, only employees may cut, fertilize, and add chemicals to the landscape.

SHRUBBERY

Cemetery management cannot control growth and assure pruning or removal when shrubbery grows too large. For these reasons, no new shrubbery is permitted in the diocesan or diocesan-maintained cemeteries. As existing shrubbery overshadows names on monuments, families will be notified. When families cannot be contacted, items will be tagged for removal before Memorial Day.

Time will be allowed for families to contact the cemetery office; if responsible parties have not responded by October first, overgrown items will be documented by photographs and removed before winter.

WATER

During all but freezing months, water outlets operate in the cemeteries where available to enable families to tend to the flowers and plants placed at graves. Outlets are not intended for lawn sprinkling devices; when found, these will be removed. Handouts detailing the location of water outlets and small containers are provided.

TRASH CONTAINERS

Units are placed along the roadways. Cooperation is asked in using these containers for cemetery refuse.

AMERICAN FLAGS

American Flags fly in each of the cemeteries to honor those who served in the armed forces of the United States. At specified times small flags are placed at veterans' graves to recognize their service.