

TOWN OF STERLING
CEMETERY RULES AND REGULATIONS



Revised 3/2022

Definitions

The Board: Town of Sterling Department of Public Works Board

DPW: Town of Sterling Department of Public Works

Lot, Grave, Plot, Burial Space: one, or more than one, adjoining graves

Interment: the permanent disposition of the remains of a deceased person by cremation, interment, or burial

Monument: a memorial of granite, or other approved stone, which shall extend above the surface of the ground

Marker: a marker of granite, bronze or other approved stone, which shall be flush with the surface of the ground

Office: shall mean the office of the Sterling DPW

Superintendent: shall mean the Sterling DPW Superintendent

I. Gravesite Sales and Ownership

1. Gravesites at Cemeteries under the control of the Sterling Board of Public Works, the Superintendent or his Agent will only be sold to:
 - a. Existing residents of the Town of Sterling
 - b. Past residents of the Town of Sterling
2. The DPW will print and issue deeds for gravesites sales. The DPW is only authorized to issue deeds and sell gravesites to town residents and former town residents. A vote of the Board is required for any gravesite sales to non-residents.
3. All deeds are considered legal if signed by a majority of the Board, its authorized agent, or the DPW Superintendent or his authorized agent.

4. A single individual can purchase one (1) to four (4) gravesites, if available, by completing an application and paying the fee (land and perpetual care). If an individual wishes to purchase more than four (4) gravesites, they should submit a written request to the Board. The Board will act on requests for over four (4) gravesites at their regularly scheduled meetings.
5. A single gravesite can be used to intern no more than the following:
 - a. One (1) casket and three (3) urns, or
 - b. Six (6) urns
6. Gravesite cannot be sold between private parties or transferred outside of the private owner's family without the endorsement of the Board.
7. Only lots on existing roads (paved or gravel) are for sale.

II. Work at and Access to Town Cemeteries

1. Only Town personnel or Town hired contractors are allowed to perform any work on Town cemeteries.
2. Only the main roadway circle will be snow plowed for vehicular traffic once all public ways in Town are deemed safe for travel. The gravesite sections will be cleared at the DPW's discretion.
3. The opening of graves for interment will be entirely at the discretion of the DPW during the months of December, January, February and March, with consideration of the depth of frost and snow, and also the mud condition common in the late winter and early spring. Winter interment (if approved) is only available in Hillside Cemetery. All other cemeteries are closed for the four (4) winter months.
4. The Board or its Agent reserves the right to charge extra for snow removal in connection with winter burials, said charges to be in addition to any burial charge in effect at the time, and to make any additional charges in any other case where it becomes necessary to remove snow, ledge or open frozen ground. (see fees & charges)

III. Gravesite Decorations, Markers and Monuments

1. The Board reserves to itself the entire control of all vegetation within the cemetery's boundaries, including the right of removal without notice when it considers such removal advisable.
2. All persons are forbidden to gather flowers or to break or injure any tree, shrub, vine or plant. The Superintendent or its designated representative may remove from lots anything objectionable or injurious to the uses and purposes of the Cemetery or contrary to its rules and regulations.
3. Lot owners who own two or more adjoining lots shall have the privilege of planting to the extent of two (2) shrubs and one (1) flower bed per lot, and shall be responsible for the maintenance thereof.
4. Shrubs shall be of the evergreen variety. Shrubs may not exceed the height of the monument nor be allowed to grow into neighboring lots. Lot owners are responsible for

the trimming of new growth on their shrubs so as to maintain a neat appearance. The Board or its authorized representative reserves the right to remove without notice any shrub that is found to be damaged, diseased, wholly or partially dead, oversized, unsightly or in an unmatched pair. No decorations are allowed on shrubs. Any decoration placed will be removed and disposed of.

5. Plantings, where permitted, shall be at the owner's expense.
6. Plantings for single lots are to be limited to the front of the headstone only, nothing along the side or behind the monument. All plantings are subject to the approval and supervision of the Board or its designated representative. Shrubs are not allowed on single lots.
7. Flower beds may not exceed the length of the monument nor one foot in width, and must be maintained in weed-free condition at all times by the lot owner. No permanent borders around flower beds will be allowed. Borders shall be ground level and not impede with general maintenance. Unsightly beds may be removed at any time at the discretion of the Board or its authorized representative.
8. No plant species considered "invasive" as categorized by the Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group (MIPAG) will be allowed.
9. No decorations on top of monuments are allowed.
10. The DPW will not be responsible for anything placed or left on the lots by the owners. When work on lots is performed by the owners, they must remove all rubbish and excavated earth to such place as provided for that purpose.
11. Decorations will be allowed upon interment for up to 30 days and then removed by the DPW.
12. Memorial Lights and candles will be allowed and will not be annually removed, but as with any temporary decoration, the DPW reserves the right to remove or modify these memorials should they become unsightly or a nuisance to maintenance efforts or a safety issue.
13. Permission must be received from the Town before any raised monuments are installed. The DPW has sole discretion in establishing the location and orientation of monuments and markers.

The maximum dimensions for granite monuments for gravesite lots are as follows:

- a. Single Lot: Flat markers or sloped marker to conform to flat marker dimensions:
2' x 1' monument
- b. Two (2) grave lots: 3' X 1' monument, maximum height (inclusive of base) 48"
- c. Four (4) grave lots: 4' X 1' monument, maximum height (inclusive of base) 48"

IV. Interment

1. Sealed covered vaults must be provided for all casket burials. The DPW does NOT provide casket vaults.
2. A minimum of thirty-six (36) working hours, notice is required from the time of application of an interment order to the time of burial.
3. No burials will be scheduled on the following holidays that are observed by the Town of Sterling:
New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Patriots Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.
4. All Monday – Friday burials are to be completed by 2:00 pm. Additional fees will be charged for services that are longer than 2 hours. See section VI for an outline of the fees.
5. No remains will be interred until and unless a Gravesite Deed has been issued and Interment Order has been received with all related fees paid.

V. Disinterment

1. A minimum of seventy-two (72) working hour notice is required from the time of application of a disinterment order.
2. Disinterment can only be scheduled Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 AM and 2:00 PM and not on any holiday observed by the Town of employees. (See Section IV-3 above.)
3. Fee for disinterment of vault containing caskets is noted in Section VI and does not include any lifting or relocating of vault.

VI. Fees and Charges

- Gravesite Land Purchase Price including perpetual care:
 - \$800.00 per grave, (i.e. \$3,200 per four (4) grave lot)
- Monument Foundation Installation
 - \$80/sf of foundation top
- Interment Order (Casket)
 - \$850.00 Weekdays (Monday-Friday, excluding holidays)
 - \$1,100.00 Weekends (Saturday, Sunday, excluding holidays)
 - Child (1-10 years old) \$350 any day
 - Infant (less than 1 year old) no charge
- Interment Order (Urn)
 - \$250.00 Weekdays
 - \$375.00 Weekends
 - Additional \$100 if a vault is required

- Extended Service
 - \$200 per each half hour over two hours
- Winter Grave Opening **Additional** charge per interment from December 15 to March 15
 - \$400.00 for casket interment
 - \$200.00 for urn interment
- Disinterment of Vault containing casket
 - \$1,000 per disinterment
- Disinterment of Urn
 - \$400 without vault
 - \$500 with vault
- Re-interment of either casket or urn will be charged at above interment prices
- Prices do not include set up or cost of vault, lowering device, tent, greens, extra greens or coco mats and stand.
- The Board will re-evaluate the fees above on a biennial basis.

VII. Disclaimer of Liability

1. The Sterling Department of Public Works disclaims all responsibility for loss or damage to any lot, monument, memorial or planting from causes beyond its reasonable control, including but not limited to loss or damage caused by an act of God, the elements, earthquake, war, common enemy, air raid, invasion, insurrection, riot, order of any military or civil authority, thieves, vandals, strikers, malicious mischief makers, explosions, terrorism, unavoidable accidents or any cause, similar or dissimilar, beyond the control of the DPW whether the loss or damage be direct or related.
2. The DPW reserves the right to delay a burial or lot sale due to the disruption of normal Cemetery operations.
3. The DPW may, and it hereby expressly reserves the right to at any time or times, adopt new rules and regulations, or amend, alter and/or repeal any rule, regulations and/or article, section, paragraph and/or sentence in these rules and regulations. All applicable state laws and regulations shall apply.

Said Rules and Regulations adopted on this day, March 8, 2022, by the Town of Sterling Department of Public Works Board, also known as the Cemetery Commissioners.