

Exeter Cemetery District

Flower & Memorial Policy and Removal Schedule: Exeter Public Cemetery

Approved by the Exeter Public Cemetery Board of Trustees on February 12, 2025; Effective March 1, 2025

The Board of Trustees and staff of the Exeter Public Cemetery District are working diligently to enhance the cemetery grounds, and have developed this Flower & Memorial Policy and Removal Schedule for the community to follow as the standard for cemetery aesthetics and for maintenance efficiency. A routine clean-up schedule and clear designation of what is and isn't allowed will give guidance to community members with loved ones buried at the Exeter Public Cemetery.

This Flower & Memorial Policy and Removal Schedule supersedes any previously posted or adopted flower and memorial policies and removal schedules.

The Exeter Public Cemetery District is not responsible for items left on headstones or gravesites.

Flower & Memorial Policy

Implementation of this policy will make headstones and gravesites more accessible for landscaping and equipment needs, and alleviate hazards that could pose a risk to the public or cemetery employees. Cleaning, mowing, weed eating, blowing, general landscaping, and the opening and closing of graves are ongoing and completed regularly.

Implementation: Community members will have one month (30 days) from the initial date this policy is posted to comply. After 30 days, the Exeter Public Cemetery staff will begin full implementation of the Flower & Memorial Policy. The Exeter Public Cemetery District, its employees and Board of Trustees are not liable or responsible for any items left on gravesites or headstones. Gravesites without headstones must also comply with the Flower & Memorial Policy.

Flower & Memorial Policy Rules:

- **Solar Lights:** Two (2) solar lights will be allowed per gravesite. Solar lights must be made of plastic material (no glass lights allowed).
- **Balloons:** Balloons are not allowed. They deflate and hold water and are a significant safety hazard. Balloons will be immediately removed by Cemetery staff.
- **Rocks/Stones/Glass Pebbles/Marbles:** Rocks, stones, glass pebbles and/or marbles may not be placed around headstones or in vases, no exceptions. They are dangerous during landscape maintenance, posing a serious danger to the visiting public and Cemetery staff, and are not allowed. Any headstone found with rocks and/or stones and/or glass pebbles or marbles will have all items immediately removed, regardless of the date of the month or week.
- **Vases:** Built-in vases should be used. No glass vases are allowed. If built-in vases are stuck, please contact Cemetery staff to loosen the vase.
- **Flowers:** Artificial or fresh flowers may be placed in vases on the headstones. Please remove plastic wrapping from fresh flowers before placing them on graves. To help prevent mosquito breeding, please limit water use in vases.
- **Flags/Crosses/Pin Wheels/Other Stick Decorations:** Flags, crosses, pin wheels and other decorations on a stick may be placed in the vases on the headstones. If that is not possible, a maximum of one (1) per grave may be placed at the top of the headstone or grave. This includes personalized flags.

- Confetti: Confetti is NOT allowed to be sprinkled on headstones or graves. Confetti is considered intentional littering.
- Fencing: No fencing is allowed around gravesites. Any fencing will be immediately removed.
- Fake Grass & Sod: Any fake grass is not allowed on gravesites, as this prohibits grass in the area to grow and interferes with landscaping maintenance. The installation of sod is also not allowed.
- Items in Trees: No items are allowed to be hung in trees, no exceptions. Any items found hanging or stored in trees will be removed immediately by Cemetery staff.

Removal Schedule

To maintain a respectful and well-kept environment for all visitors, flowers and decorations placed on graves will be removed periodically based on the time of year and maintenance season. This schedule ensures proper grounds maintenance, including mowing and trimming, while also providing a fair and consistent approach for all families visiting the cemetery.

The Removal Schedule has not been changed from the previous policy and is in effect.

1. Non-Mowing Season (November 30 – March 1 annually)

During the non-mowing season, which runs from **November 30 to March 1 each year**, all flowers, decorations, and items placed on graves will be removed on the **LAST DAY OF THE MONTH**. This includes artificial flowers, vases, wreaths, ornaments, glass and any other personal items.

- **Removal Date:** **LAST DAY** of each month during the non-mowing season (*November 30, December 31, January 31, February 28*)
- **Items to be Removed:** **ALL ITEMS ON GRAVESITE** will be removed on the last day of the month. Please pick up any items you'd like to keep prior to the last day of the month.
- Items may be brought back after the clean-up day, but must be kept within compliance with the Flower & Memorial Policy Rules.
- The Cemetery District is not responsible for items left on headstones or gravesites.

2. Mowing Season (March 1 – November 30 annually)

During the mowing season, which runs from **March 1 to November 30 each year**, **ALL ITEMS placed on graves will be removed EVERY FRIDAY** of each week. This allows for proper groundskeeping and ensures that the cemetery remains clean and well-maintained.

- **Removal Day:** **EVERY FRIDAY** during the mowing season (**March 1 – November 30**).
- **ALL Items to be Removed:** All flowers, solar lights, vases, statues/trinkets/personal items, flags/crosses/pin wheels/stick decorations, and any other items placed on gravesites will be removed regardless when items were placed.
- Items families would like to keep should be picked up by Thursday evening of each week.
- Items may be brought back after the clean-up day, but must be kept within compliance with the Flower & Memorial Policy Rules.
- The Cemetery District is not responsible for items left on headstones or gravesites.

3. Guidelines for Flower and Decoration Placement:

- Flowers and decorations may be placed on graves at any time, but it is important to note that they will be removed according to the schedule outlined above.
- Please use appropriate, non-perishable items that are weather-resistant, particularly during the winter months when items may be damaged by rain and ice.
- Flower sprays and wreaths will be left in place on fresh burials until flowers have dried.
- The Cemetery is not responsible for any items that are left on headstones or gravesites, and subsequently removed, broken or stolen.

4. Exceptions and Special Considerations: In the case of holidays or special observances (e.g., Memorial Day, All Saints' Day), families may be permitted to place flowers or decorations for a limited period. These items will still be subject to removal according to the regular schedule following the designated holiday.

5. Enforcement: Cemetery staff will monitor the grounds and ensure adherence to the Flower & Memorial Policy and decoration removal schedule. Items that remain after the designated removal dates will be cleared to maintain grounds and avoid obstruction of cemetery maintenance operations.

6. Communication and Updates: Any changes to the removal schedule (such as due to severe weather or special circumstances) will be communicated to the public through signage at the cemetery and on the cemetery website. Families are encouraged to periodically check for updates to this policy.

By following this policy, we ensure that all visitors to the cemetery are able to honor their loved ones in a respectful, clean, and well-maintained environment throughout the year. For questions or clarification on the Flower & Memorial Policy or Removal Schedule, please email info@exetercemeterydistrict.org or call (559) 592-3067.