

TAUPŌ DISTRICT COUNCIL

CEMETERIES HANDBOOK 2023



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Sources: Queenstown Lakes District Council Cemeteries Handbook 2019, Central Otago District Council Cemeteries Handbook 2020, Taupō District Council Cemetery Bylaw 2012, and Taupō District Council Cemetery Management Policy 2006.



Introduction

The Taupō District Council Handbook (**Handbook**) contains rules and conditions that apply to provision of services, operational requirements, and acceptable conduct in cemeteries owned by, or operated by the Taupō District Council (**Council**). The Handbook also provides information to assist the smooth running, operation, and provision of information to the public about Council cemeteries.

The rules and conditions applicable to Council cemeteries contained in this Handbook have been made in accordance with the Taupō District Council Cemeteries Bylaw 2023 (**Bylaw**).

Operational Cemeteries

The operational cemeteries within the Taupō District include:

- Taupō Lawn Cemetery
- Tūrangi Lawn Cemetery
- Magakino Lawn Cemetery

For interments in these cemeteries please contact Taupō District Council Customer Services, phone 07 376 0899 or 0800 ASK TDC

Other Cemeteries

Taupō Settlers Cemetery, located on Gascoigne Reserve off Spa Road, is closed. All maintenance is still the responsibility of Council.

Within the Taupō Lawn Cemetery is a large undeveloped piece of land, this area sits adjacent to the Western Block and holds a large number of unmarked settler graves and will not be developed.



Definitions

Act means the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 or any superseding legislation.

Burial Right means the exclusive right to a burial in a particular plot.

Bylaw means the Taupō District Council Cemeteries Bylaw 2023.

Cemetery or **cemeteries** means any land owned or operated by the Council as a cemetery but excludes any closed cemetery or Urupā.

Closed Cemetery means a cemetery that has been closed in accordance with the Act.

Council means the Taupō District Council.

Disinter or **disinterment** means the removal of a human body or ash remains from the earth or any vault.

Hanbook means this document, which contains the rules and conditions that apply to provision of services, operational requirements and acceptable conduct.

Inter or **interment** means the placement of a human body or ash remains in a grave or any vault.

Monument includes a headstone, plaque, panel or other memorial to a deceased person.

Monumental Masonry Work includes the establishment, repair or modification of a monument.

Natural Burial means a burial that has a low environmental impact, including the body not being treated with chemicals or oils that prevent or slow down the decay of the body by bacteria. Natural burial areas are planted to encourage ecological restoration, and in the long term, individual plots may not be identifiable.

Policy means the Taupō District Public Cemetery Management Policy 2006.



General Information

Opening Hours

Cemeteries operated by the Council are open for public visiting seven days a week.

Cemeteries are open for interments Monday to Sunday & Public Holidays (excluding Christmas Day, Good Friday and ANZAC Day).

- Monday to Friday 8.00am – 4pm.
- Saturday, Sunday & Public Holidays 8.00am – 11am.

Cemetery Fees and Forms

A table showing the applicable fees and charges can be found on the Council website along with application forms regarding cemetery services.

The applicable fees must be paid in full within one month after burial (e.g. burial right, interment, disinterment, maintenance) taking place.

The person requesting the interment or disinterment will need to submit the appropriate forms through the Council website, where the fee will be confirmed by Council, prior to the interment taking place. Further detail and arrangement regarding prior payment will be communicated to the applicant by Council.

The forms referred to in this Handbook and which are available on Council's website are:

- [Application for Burial or Ash Interment](#)
- [Application to Reserve and Purchase a Plot](#)
- [Application to Erect a Headstone or Plaque](#)

Booking procedure

The Council is to be notified by telephone or email of an intended burial. There is no minimum notice period for burials in our Cemeteries.

The Funeral Director, or person requesting the interment, must submit applicable forms. These can be found on the Council website, or at any of our Customer Service Centres.

Pet Burials

No animal(s), including cats, dogs, birds or fish, either as ashes or body, may be interred in a Council cemetery unless placed in a sealed casket with the deceased.



Interments

Application for Interment

The person arranging the interment must lodge the following relevant applications with the Council:

- [Application for Burial or Ash Interment](#) (for each and every interment)

No interments (of deceased person or other human remains) can take place in a Council cemetery until the Council has approved the application referred above.

Allocation of Plots

The Council has responsibility for allocating plots for burials. If an applicant requests that an interment occur in a particular area of a Council cemetery, the request will be considered provided there are vacant, unsold plots available in that area.

No burial or ash interment may take place without the approval of the person holding burial rights to that plot. If that person is deceased or debilitated, the immediate next of kin or the person acting on behalf of the deceased or the deceased's estate may give approval for a burial in the plot or placement of a monumnet.

Hours of Interments

The expected time of arrival in the cemetery must be specified on the 'Application for Interment' form. If the expected arrival time is going to change by more than 15 minutes of the original notified time, the Council or Sexton must be notified of the new time.

A Saturday, Sunday & Public Holidays fee will be charged for all interments, including ash interments, taking place on a Saturday, Sunday & Public Holidays.

Notification of Interment

There is no minimum notice period for burials in our Cemeteries.

Ash Interments

The bookings and forms required for ash interments are managed in the same way as a casket interment. The Sexton will not be on site for the interment, but returns to the site following the ash interment to ensure the area is tidy and secure.

Grave preparation

Only a Sexton appointed by Council in accordance with the Bylaw may dig and prepare the grave (for ashes or a casket) in a Council cemetery.

For burials and graves covered by a concrete cap or surrounds, only an approved Monumental Mason can break the concrete. The Monumental Mason will likely charge a fee for this work.

Responsibility sits with the owner of burial rights to that plot to reinstate the concrete cover after burial, provided an approved monument permit is obtained.

If that person is deceased or debilitated, that person's estate or the person who gave approval on their behalf is responsible for reinstating the cover after burial.

If the concrete is not reinstated within a reasonable time, the Council may remove the concrete completely, and replace with lawn, or cover with stones.



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A request may be made to Council for friends and family of the deceased to fill in the grave, subject to the conditions set out in this Handbook.

Interment Equipment

Equipment for carrying out interments is supplied and removed by the Sexton, who is responsible for ensuring all health and safety procedures are complied with while on site.

Dis-interment / Re-interment

Any application received by Taupō District Council shall be processed pursuant to sections 51 and 55 of the Act (or superseding legislation), and subject to the payment of fees referred to at the end of this Handbook. This application relates to disinterment/re-interment of the deceased or ashes of the deceased.

DIY Caskets

Council allow for DIY caskets in the cemetery, however if using a Funeral Director prior approval may be required.

Poor Persons Burial

The Act requires Council to bury the body of poor persons, and persons from any hospital, penal institution, or other public institution free of charge upon an order from a Justice of the Peace. An application for interment form must still be completed before the burial takes place.

Returned Servicemen Areas

Ex-Service personnel who have had war service or service that is defined equivalent to war service, and their spouses or partners, may be buried in the serviceman area.

If the interment of a deceased Veteran is to be in the servicemen area, a standard ex-service plaque is available at a subsidised rate through Veterans' Affairs New Zealand. In the servicemen area, only the standard ex-service memorial plaque is permitted. The plaques are of uniform style and there is no provision for personal messages or photographs.

If the interment is to be outside the servicemen area of the Council cemetery, the next of kin can order a standard ex-service memorial at a subsidised rate. Details of war service need to be supplied on the 'Application for Interment' form. Failure to provide this information may result in the application being declined.

Only Service Person and their spouse or partner may be interred in the servicemen area.

Double depth interments are permitted in the servicemen area to allow for the spouse or partner of the deceased Veteran to be interred in the same plot. A double plaque commemorating both deceased persons is provided at a subsidised rate.

If the spouse or partner wishes to be interred to the side of the Service Person, they can purchase the burial right for the adjoining plot subject at the standard fee.

Children cannot be interred in a Service Person's plot unless they are eligible for interment in the Servicemen Area in their own right.



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War Service Eligibility & Contacts

Please refer to Veterans' Affairs New Zealand website for information regarding eligibility

www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz

Free phone (NZ): 0800 483 8372 (08800 4 VETERAN)

Locating Graves

Please contact Council or alternatively visit the Council website for more information.

Grave Testing

A testing service is available at no cost to the applicant to obtain the availability of sufficient space for a second interment in an existing grave.

Natural Burials

Natural Burials are available in the Taupō Lawn Cemetery only. This is due to our relatively small population and development of other sites could see them lay vacant for some years.



Pre-purchase of Burial Rights

Pre-purchase of Burial Rights

Council allows the pre-purchasing of interment plots, except Natural Burials. Up to four burial plots or two cremation plots may be pre-purchased. For purchase of more than the number stated, prior consent must be obtained from Taupo District Council.

To apply to reserve and purchase a plot, complete our application form on our website.

Duration of Burial Plots

Sometimes burial rights are never used, and thus take up valuable space in cemeteries. If no interment occurs within 60 years of the burial rights being purchased, Council will attempt to locate the purchaser or next of kin to confirm the plot is still required. If the purchaser and next of kin are unable to be located, then the plot ownership will revert back to Council in accordance with section 10 of the Act.

Transferring Burial Rights

Should a plot no longer be required, the holder of the burial rights may transfer their interest in the plot to another party. The current burial right holder and purchaser must notify the Council with the change of ownership details.

The Council will not re-purchase burial rights after they have been sold.



Burial Interments

Size of Burial Plots

The standard size for all new casket burials are as follows:

- Burial plot: 800mm x 2400mm

If a larger plot is required, arrangements must be made at the time of booking and confirmed with the Council. If we do receive a request for a wider plot, we would book a plot at the end of a berm so as to not impact on the adjoining plot.

Depths of Interments

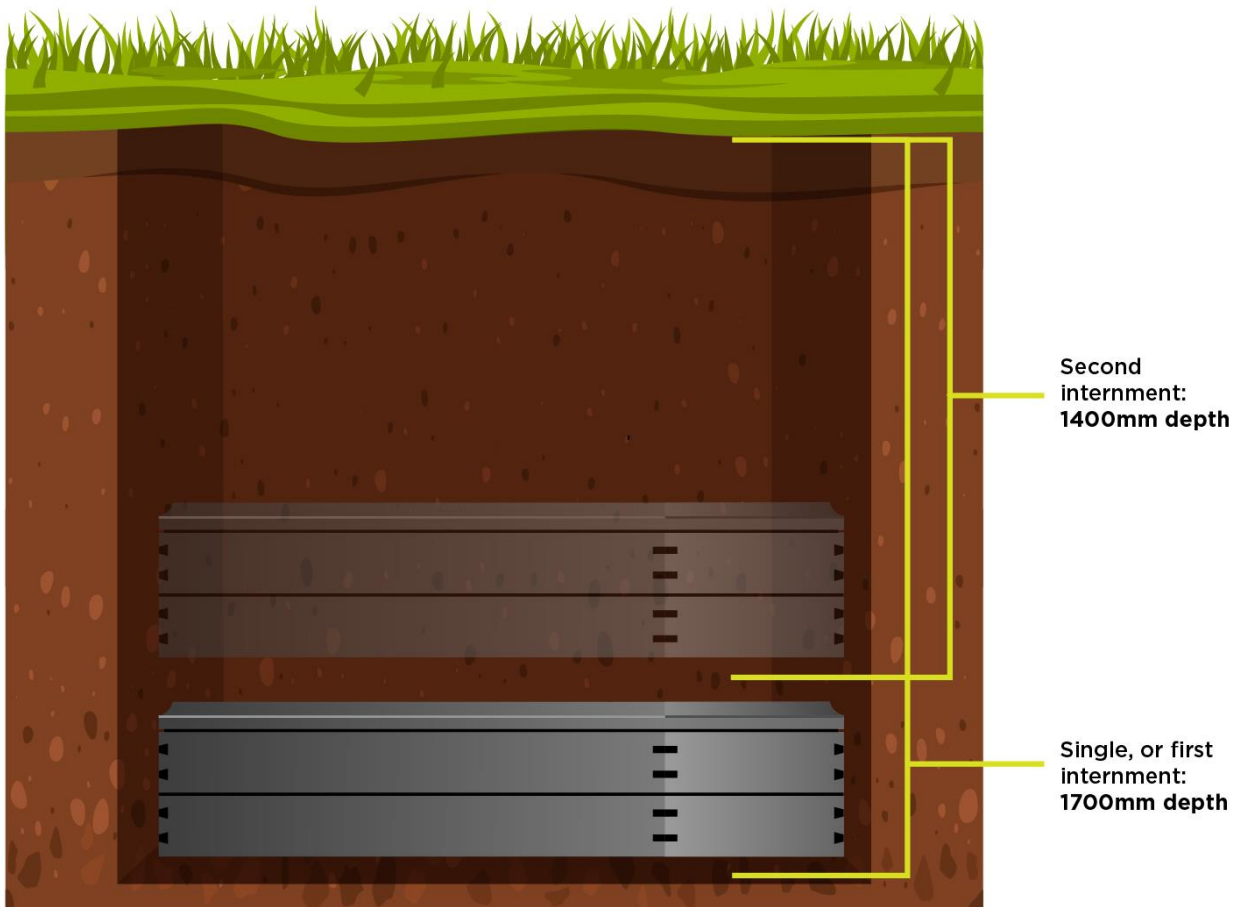
The standard depth of interments shall be sufficient to enable ground cover, to the existing ground level, of at least a minimum of:

- Single or first interment: 1700mm
- Second interment: 1400mm

Burial Plots

No more than two deceased persons can be interred in each burial plot.

[Please refer to below diagram]





Ash Interments

Size of Plots for Interments

Unless otherwise specified by the standard size for all new ash plots is as follows:

- Ash Plot: 400mm x 400mm

Depths of Interments

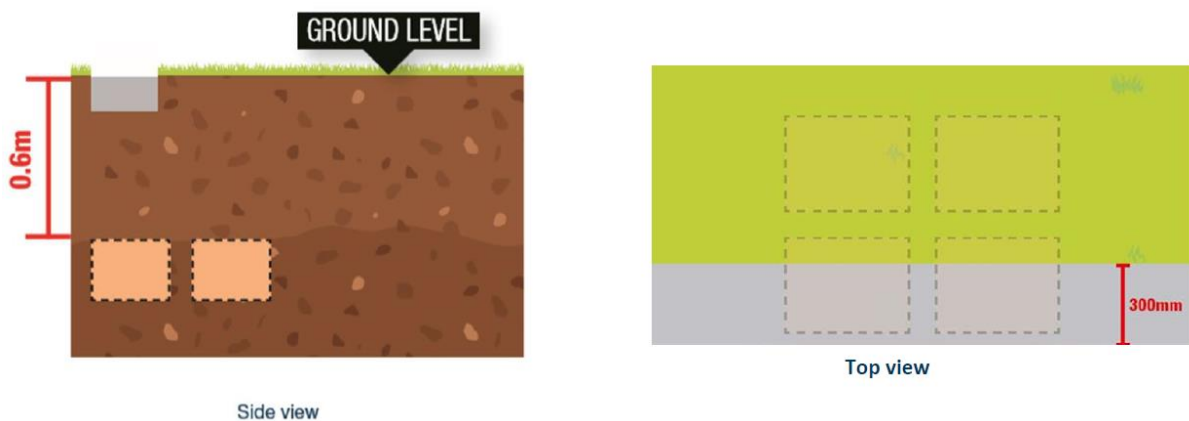
The standard depth of interments shall be sufficient to enable ground cover, to the existing ground of at least a minimum of:

- Ash Interment: 600mm

All new ash plots can hold up to a maximum of six ash interments depending on urn size:

- Four in front of the headstone
- Two under the headstone

[Please refer to diagram below]



Ash Interments into Burial Plots

The above information remains the same, a maximum of four ash interments is designated per burial plot. This aids the Sexton in preparation of the plot should a burial take place after an ash interment.

Ash Interments at Locations other than Burial Site

The dispersal of human ashes at locations such as waterways, mountains, or other non-cemetery sites is culturally inappropriate to local Iwi and Hapu. Human ashes are not to be interred or scattered at any place other than an ash plot or cemetery.

Ashes can be scattered on private property if the property owner gives their permission first.



Monumental Work and Monuments

Installation of Monuments and Plaques

Where appropriate, Council will provide a concrete beam for headstones to be installed on. Cemetery beams can differ in size and it is up to the Monumental Mason to ensure the headstone meets the specifications outlined on the next page.

Only Monumental Masons, approved by the New Zealand Master Monumental Masons Association, will be permitted to erect monuments within a Council cemetery. Council endorses and recognizes the importance of New Zealand Master Monumental Masons Association.

No monumnetal masonry work may commence until the Council has granted permission for the work under the Bylaw. A monument permit is required for any monumental work including alterations or modifications being undertaken in a Council cemetery, to ensure the headstone is placed on the correct plot and also to ensure they adhere to specifications in this Handbook.

Owners of burial rights, or if deceased, the immediate next of kin, may give permissin for a monument to be erected, or an additional inscription to be added to an existing monument. Typically, a monumental mason applies for the permit on behalf of the burial rights owner/next of kin.

The Council can provide information regarding local Monumental Masons.

General Specifications for Monuments and Plaques

As per NZS 4242:2018 a monument must not be made out of sandstone, limestone, wood, fiberglass, ceramic, plastic, glass or any other unsuitable material specified by Council.

Concrete base work for all monuments shall:

- Not stand higher than 150mm above the highest point of concrete beam or ground level, whichever is the higher;
- Be laid to the satisfaction of Council and in accordance with sound engineering principles as set out in NZS 4242:2018 Headstones and Cemetery Monuments;
- Not be wider than 1000mm and stand no higher than 150mm.

Plaques must have a minimum clearance of 10mm from the edge of the plaque to the edge of the plot on any ashes beam and be no more than 10mm thick. It is the responsibility of the plot owner to ensure that the plaque is of the correct dimensions for the particular plot concerened.

No monumental masons may mix cement or mortar anywhere in the cemetery otherwise than on a watertight platform.

All necessary precautions shall be taken to ensure that no damage is done to footpaths, roads, plots or grass.



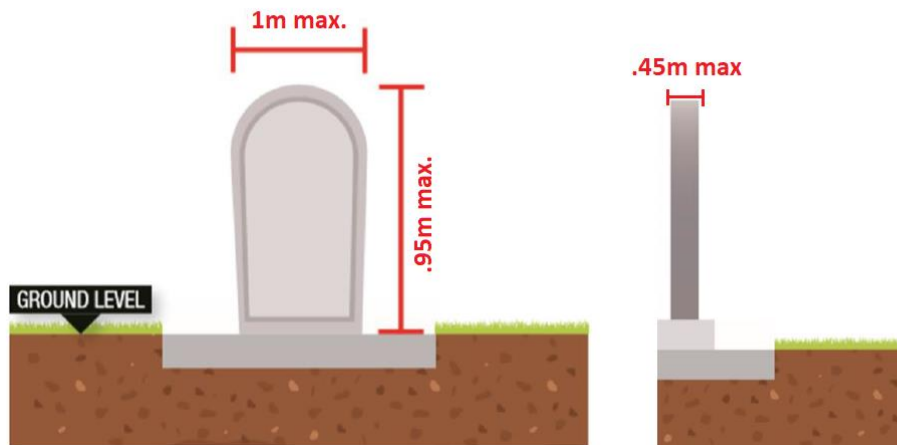
Specifications for Monuments and Plaques for Individual Cemeteries

There are different requirements for monuments in different cemeteries and areas within cemeteries. All monuments including headstones and plaques are to be constructed in accordance with NZS 4242:2018 Headstones & Cemetery Monuments, sound engineering principles, and to the satisfaction of the Council.

Lawn Cemetery Monument Size

In respect of Taupō, Tūrangi and Mangakino Lawn beams, the maximum dimensions are:

- 950mm(h) x 450mm (d) x 1065mm(w)



In Taupō, the Opepe Cremation Berm has provision for a standing monument to these specifications:

- 600mm(h) x 350mm(d) x 560mm(w)

All other cremation berms or memorial areas, District wide, are to have plaques to the maximum dimensions of:

- 230mm(l) x 150mm(h) x 16mm(d)

Monument Maintenance

Maintenance of monuments are the responsibility of the burial rights owner or their representative. Monuments must be kept in good repair. The Council does not take any responsibility for damage or vandalism to any monument.

The Council may remove from the cemetery, any monuments that have fallen into a state of disrepair, or if the Sexton or Council determines that a monument is a health and safety risk. If the risk is not significant, Council may give the person responsible (the owner or next of kin) written notice to repair or remove the item that is in disrepair. Failure to comply with the notice will result in the monument being removed at the cost to the person who owns the burial rights to that plot.

If a monument poses a significant health and safety risk or there is no owner or representative available to effect repairs or permit removal, an approved Monumental Mason, at the request of Council, may lay the monument flat within the grave surrounds or remove it from the cemetery if there is no grave surround. A photographic record of the monument will be taken and filed with the cemetery records if the monument is removed.



Offensive Monuments

When receiving applications to place a monument, like a headstone, in a public cemetery council will consider if the monument would cause offence or unfairly overwhelm adjacent areas due to its design, wording, or other markings. The word 'offence' refers to a proposed monument's design, wording or marks that are capable of wounding feelings or arousing real anger, disgust, resentment or outrage in the mind of a reasonable person (where a reasonable person visits a cemetery). Council will also consider the Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993 when determining if the design would cause offence. If a monument would cause offence, then Council may require the design to be altered.

Removal

No person shall remove from any cemetery or grave, any headstone, monument or plaque, without notification to Council.



Health and Safety

Caskets

The casket size, shape, including the type and size of the handles are to be recorded on the application for interment. Caskets must fit within the dimensions of the chosen gravesite

DIY Caskets

Council allows for DIY caskets in the cemetery, however if using a Funeral Director prior approval may be required.

Request to Fill Grave

Friends and family of the deceased can request that the Sexton allow them to fill in the grave. There are two options available:

- Only fill the grave to cover the casket.
- Fill the complete grave by hand only. The Council must be advised of this request before the interment takes place. Families will need to follow the directions of the Sexton during this process.

Site Safety at Gravesite

The Funeral Director or Family representative will advise the Sexton upon arrival of the deceased person or other human remains to the gravesite, and at that time the site will be handed over to the Funeral Director. The Funeral Director is then responsible for the safety of the members of the public at the gravesite until the Funeral Director formally hands the site back to the Sexton and members of the public must follow the direction of the Sexton.

Any persons in attendance and/or involved in a burial or interment procedure in a Council cemetery, must adhere to all directions given by the Sexton at all times.

Items Prohibited for Burial

While Council understands certain items have a lot of meaning to Whānau looking to bury their loved ones, we also need to ensure the safe operation of Council cemeteries.

There are several reasons for this, from preventing breakdowns of digging machinery, protecting the health and safety of visitors and staff, ensuring we can retrieve your loved one's ashes or body during disinterment, and minimising our impact on the environment.

The non-exhaustive list below covers the types of items that cannot be placed in Council Cemetery plots outside of caskets.

- Alcohol
- Ammunition or explosive material
- Batteries
- Crash helmets and hardhats
- Crockery
- Die cast metals, aluminium, and copper (large items only)
- Garden spades, forks etc.
- Glass, such as bottles, vases, and picture frames



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- Lighters
- Laptop computers
- Mattresses
- Mobile phones
- Motorcycle leathers
- Any pressurised containers
- Prosthetic limbs
- PVC (in all forms)
- Wet suits and surfboards
- Products containing polystyrene foams
- Products that are volatile
- Wire

When you are preparing a loved one burial, please make sure none of the above items are placed into the plot or inform your Funeral Director so that they can be easily removed by them or the family before burial.



Behaviour in Cemeteries

Appropriate behaviour

Our community comes together within our cemeteries for contemplation and reflection, and to memorialise their loved ones. Everyone visiting our cemeteries must maintain appropriate and respectful behaviour.

No person may behave in a manner, or bring an item into a cemetery or crematorium, that does any of the following:

- Is a nuisance or is offensive to another person;
- Damages or interferes with any property, memorial or decoration owned by the Council; or
- Damages the property of another person.

No one may disturb or interrupt a funeral, burial or cremation.

Vehicles in Cemeteries

Vehicles are only permitted to use designated roadways and car parks whilst in the cemetery. The use of vehicles must adhere to the Reserves Bylaw 2021 and Traffic Bylaw 2014 and all relevant Council Bylaws.

Vehicles may only access cemeteries from:

- 7.30am to 5.00pm

The speed limit in all Council cemeteries shall not exceed 20km/hr unless a different speed limit is specified, and ordinary traffic rules are to be observed at all times.

The drivers of all vehicles must yield right of way to any funeral procession (cortege) in any cemetery. If the Sexton indicates that a vehicle should stop or move, the driver must respond as directed.

The Sexton or Council may temporarily close the cemetery to vehicles, provided the closure is clearly displayed using the appropriate signage. No private vehicle is to be left or driven into any cemetery when the cemetery is closed.

Control of Dogs within Cemeteries

Dogs are permitted in cemeteries subject to the Control of Dogs Bylaw 2021

Horses and other animals

No horse or other animals are permitted in any Council cemeteries.

Promotional Activities

The promotion or advertising of goods or services within a Council cemetery is not permitted unless in accordance with permission granted by the Council under the Bylaw.

Commercial photography and filming

Any person using a Council-controlled cemetery for the purpose of commercial photography and filming, or photography or filming for a media purpose, must first obtain written approval from the Council and the consent of the family or Funeral Director. Funeral Directors may only authorise the taking of photographs or film after they have consent from all affected persons.



Misconduct

No one may disturb or interrupt a funeral, or cause an annoyance or nuisance within a Council cemetery, or cause damage to land, buildings or chattels in a cemetery.

Authorisation to Conduct Certain Activities

No one other than the Sexton or person authorised by a Sexton may engage in interment or disinterment or operate any burial machinery or equipment in a Council cemetery.



Tributes

Wreaths and Other Tributes

Wreaths, food items, and other floral tributes or ornaments not properly fixed to a monument may be placed on the plot for a period of ten days following an interment. After ten days items must be removed or relocated to the concrete beam.

If items are not claimed after ten days, the Council may remove and dispose of the items. The Council may also remove any neglected or broken items.

No ceremonial fires are permitted.

Temporary Markers

A temporary marker must be removed once a permanent monument is erected.

If the Sexton, or other person authorised by the Sexton, considers that a temporary marker has fallen into a state of disrepair, they may remove it.



Maintenance of Plots and Graves

Lawn Areas

The Council maintains plots and graves in lawn areas including mowing.

Any plants (including trees and shrubs) planted on a grave following an interment will be removed after ten days and the area sown with grass seed. The grave will be maintained as lawn.

Areas with Planting

No new plants or shrubs are to be planted on graves without Council permission.

Existing plants may remain providing family or friends maintain them. If any plants are not being maintained, are encroaching outside the plot area, or inhibiting cemetery maintenance, the Council may remove them. Any plant identified in the Management of Plant Pests, Unwanted Fungi, and Unwanted Insects as they Pertain to Vegetation on Council-Owned Property 2009, and found growing on a plot or grave, will be removed.



Disinterment

Disinterment

Any requests to disinter a body must be made in the first instance to the District Health Board.

For Ashes disinterment requests, Council shall need written approval from the applicant and the extended family.

Any request received by the Council shall be conducted pursuant to section 51 and 55 of the Act (or superseding legislation), and subject to the payment of fees as the Council may determine from time to time. This application relates to disinterment / re-interment of the deceased or ashes of the deceased.



Genealogical Information

The Council is currently developing a database which in future may provide public access to cemetery records on the Council website.



Council Relationships

All Council cemeteries reside on gifted land and with this gift comes some relationships we must honour.

Taupō Cemetery

The Taupō Cemetery was gifted to the people of Taupō by the Rickit Whanau, their Urupā lies within the lawn cemetery. All enquiries must be vetted by Aroha Murray as the executor of the Urupā. Whanau who confirm their whakapapa do not pay for their plot but do pay for the interment fee.

Mangakino Cemetery

The Mangakino Cemetery was gifted to the people of Mangakino by the Wairarapa Moana Iwi. The current system relies on the honesty of applicants to their whakapapa back to Wairarapa Moana. Whanau who confirm their whakapapa do not pay for their plot but do pay for the interment fee. Council also undertakes maintenance of their Urupā which is separate from the public cemetery.

Tūrangi Cemetery

The Tūrangi Cemetery was gifted to the people of Tūrangi by the Ngāti Tūrangitukua Iwi. Council undertakes maintenance of their Urupā which is separate from the public cemetery.



Cemetery Fees

Purchase of Plot – Burial	Fee
0-5 years	Free
6-12 years	\$610.00
12+ years	\$820.00
Interment – Burial – Double Depth >2m	
0-5 years	\$150.00
6-12 years	\$225.00
12+ years	\$330.00
Interment – Burial – on a Saturday, Sunday or Statutory Holiday	
Additional	\$145.00
Purchase of Plot – Ashes	
All ages	\$140.00
Internment – Ashes	
All ages	\$56.00
Interment- Ashes – on a Saturday, Sunday or Statutory Holiday	
Additional	\$145.00
Interment – Ashes into an existing grave	
All ages	\$57.00
Opepe Cremation Berm Plots	
All	\$470.00
Natural Burial - Plot Purchase	
All ages	\$800.00
Natural Burial – Interment – Single Depth 0.8m	
All ages	\$335.00
Other	
Purchase of Family plots – burials & ashes	POA
Disinterment	POA
Reinterment	POA
Special cultural needs	POA
Wairarapa Māori – Mangakino Cemetery	\$295.00