



**TOWN OF PERU, MASSACHUSETTS**

**CEMETERY RULES AND GUIDELINES**

**2024**

## CEMETERY RULES AND GUIDELINES

The Town of Peru Cemetery Commission, along with the Board of Selectmen, are committed to providing a serene, attractive and contemplative setting for families of those interred in the town's cemeteries. The cemeteries are open from dawn until dusk. The following rules exist for the benefit of the long-term maintenance of the cemeteries. The following rules exist to address 80% of cemetery-related circumstances. The remaining 20% will be addressed individually by the Cemetery Sexton, Cemetery Commission and Selectboard, in that order.

A copy of these rules will be provided at the time a burial plot is requested. These rules will also be posted to the town's website.

Persons visiting the cemetery are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner at all times. Driving is not permitted in the town's cemeteries. Access ways are for maintenance of the cemeteries and for burial purposes. No recreational activities are allowed in the cemeteries. Barbecues, picnics and the consumption of alcoholic beverages are not allowed. Firearms are only allowed in the cemetery for military and memorial services. Dogs, with the exception of guide dogs, are not allowed in the cemetery and must remain inside a vehicle at all times. No horses are permitted in the cemetery.

Special cases may arise in which the enforcement of a rule may impose an unnecessary hardship. In these cases, the Selectboard or Cemetery Commission is available to make exceptions or modifications to any of these rules. Decisions in such cases shall be temporary in nature and shall in no way permanently change the rules laid out in this document.

Damage to headstones or markers is not to be considered the responsibility of the Town of Peru.

The Town of Peru Cemetery Commission is available to advise and help with headstone cleaning and resetting and can be contacted through the town's webpage.

Cemetery Commission  
Town of Peru  
3 East Main Road  
Peru MA 01235

This version endorsed by the Select Board on May 20, 2024.

## RULES / GUIDELINES

Town cemeteries are open from sunrise to sunset.

### OBTAINING CEMETERY PLOTS / CHARGES

1. All land occupied by the three cemeteries in the Town of Peru is to be owned in perpetuity by the Town of Peru. No deed, lease or title is given to plot holders.
2. All plots are assigned at the time of death. At the time of initial plot assignment, a maximum of 2 plots can be requested. Reserving of plots is not generally permitted without an impending burial.
3. Plots are free to residents of the Town of Peru. To be eligible for assignment of a plot the decedent must have been a legal human resident of the Town of Peru for 12 months.
4. Exception for non-residents: If the family of the deceased has assigned plots, the recently deceased non-resident may be buried in that plot with the consent of that family.
5. Grave sizes for single traditional casket burials will be 4 feet by 10 feet and can accommodate one casket and typically up to 4 sets of cremated remains. Six sets of cremated remains may be interred if small containers / urns are used and the specific locations are well marked. This assumes that the casket burial occurs first. If cremated remains are interred first, only 3-5 additional sets of cremated remains can be added. Cremated remains can be placed atop a previous full burial. However, a full burial will not be permitted once cremated remains have been interred. The interment of two bodies in one grave will not be allowed except in case of mother and infant or twin children. If a child (under 18 years of age) is the decedent, plots can be reserved for the parents.
6. For interment of cremated remains, a 4-foot by 5-foot plot can be requested. This size allows for the installation of a foundation for a headstone. A total of two sets of cremated remains may be interred in a 4-foot by 5-foot plot.
7. The costs for burials in the Town of Peru include fees:
  - To the Cemetery Sexton
  - For the opening of a grave for a traditional casket burial or the interment of cremated remains
8. The Cemetery Sexton, or their agent, must witness the interment of all remains.

### BURIALS

1. A burial permit must be issued by the Town Clerk and provided to the Cemetery Sexton so that a burial in Peru can be arranged. Any questions as to the issuance of the permit will be taken up with the Cemetery Sexton by the Town Clerk.
2. The Cemetery Sexton will assign a plot and arrange for the opening of the grave. The Official Disposition, Removal or Transportation Burial Permit must be given to the Cemetery Sexton at the time of burial along with payment for the burial.
3. Corner stones will be purchased within a reasonable amount of time by the family to whom the plot is assigned to establish the outline of said plot.

4. There will be no interments after November 1 or before May 1, except with the approval of the Cemetery Sexton

#### PERPETUAL CARE

1. The Town of Peru maintains Center, North and South Cemeteries regarding lawn care, parking, signage and gates (where installed).
2. The smaller town cemeteries (South Road Extension, Ford Family and South Thompson Burial Ground) are on private property. The Cemetery Commission is available to help maintain those cemeteries and headstones on request.

#### MONUMENT, FOUNDATIONS, GRADING & IMPROVEMENTS

1. Markers and stones are purchased, installed and maintained by the plot owner. Markers are required for all burials. If the deceased's name is not added to an existing headstone, an additional flush marker for cremations to mark the interment location in the plot is required.
2. All excavations, including for headstone foundations, are to be performed by the contractor retained by the Town of Peru which reports directly to the Cemetery Sexton
3. Foundations should be placed at the top of each 4' x 10' plot to allow the remaining 8 feet for the burial of an external container, such as a burial vault. Each headstone foundation should be approximately 4 feet in depth from finished grade and will be installed by the company which provides the headstone / monument. The Sexton shall approve the foundation.
4. Headstones should be placed centered on the plot and at the head of the grave.
5. No wooden crosses or temporary grave markers are allowed. The placement of permanent flush markers, headstones and monuments should occur in a reasonable amount of time to mark graves and facilitate the location of burials.
6. Grave markers (flush markers, headstones and monuments) belong to families. Family members should consult with the Cemetery Commission before cleaning, repairing or resetting a headstone / marker. Headstone rubbings are not permitted. Neglected markers may be maintained by the Cemetery Commission.

#### FLOWERS, TREES AND SHRUBS

1. All flowers should be in front of and against the central family monument. This approach facilitates maintenance of the cemetery.
2. Planting of bulbs must be confined to plots.
3. No trees, bushes or shrubs are to be planted by persons other than town representatives.
4. The town has control over all plantings and has the right to trim / prune / remove them.
5. Summer grave decorations must be removed by November 1. Winter wreaths will be permitted commencing November 15 to April 1, at which time these should be removed. All plots will be cleaned up in the Spring by April 15
6. Funeral pieces will be removed after 7 days

### FLAGS AND DECORTIONS

1. American flags will be placed on veterans' graves by the town prior to Memorial Day each year. Support for the care and respect for the flag during the remainder of the year is appreciated.
2. The following items are prohibited: fences, hedges, walls, rock gardens, curbing, enclosures, edgings, iron works, wire works, posts, boundary markers (apart from corner makers) and any glass items. Anything that could be destroyed or scattered by wind, weather or the force of cemetery equipment (e.g., mower, trimmer) will be removed. Similar articles left on plots that are inconsistent with the proper keeping of cemetery grounds will be removed without notice and disposed of.
3. The Town of Peru, the Highway Department and landscaping services will not be liable for any damage done to ornaments or personal items placed at a gravesite

### THINGS TO KNOW

Veterans are eligible for burial assistance and families should check with their veterans' agent for details.