



July 27, 2018

RE: City Begins Cemetery Rules Enforcement at City of Austin Cemeteries

Cemeteries: Austin Memorial Park, Oakwood, Oakwood Annex, Evergreen and Plummers

The City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department has updated the existing cemetery rules and will begin enforcement of these rules effective at the time of the final rule adoption. All items that are found to be out of compliance based upon the updated rules will be removed and discarded.

We understand, respect and honor the needs of families and friends to memorialize their loved ones who are at rest in our cemeteries. While being sensitive to your needs, our hope is that with a uniform approach in adhering to the pre-existing Rules and Regulations, our citizens and surrounding communities will benefit as well.

The number of benches, adornments, and site amenities such as grave borders, trellis and rock gardens, has been evaluated. Certain items can make an impact on the public's safety and disrupt effective maintenance operations and services. As a result, a clean-up day is being planned to remove all non-compliant items.

Ninety days prior to the clean-up day, large signs will be placed at the entrances of all five City of Austin cemeteries, and small signs will be posted throughout the cemeteries. Considerable efforts will be made to contact families to remove items via media, email, newspapers, Facebook, City of Austin website, mail-outs, Next Door and Twitter. We recognize that some decorations may be expensive or hand-crafted, and we would not want these types of memorials damaged or discarded.

Sixty and Thirty days prior to the clean-up day notices via media, email, newspapers, Facebook, City of Austin website, mail-outs, Next Door and Twitter will be repeated.

The items that need to be removed include, but are not limited to perishable, breakable and hazardous materials, benches, borders, paving stones, bird baths, bird houses, wind chimes, decorative flags, articles of clothing, glass containers, balloons, pinwheels, candles, stuffed toys, and ornaments. The benches that are currently in the cemetery with a concrete foundation, and that are made out of materials referenced in the updated rules 14.4.9D, will be allowed to remain.

After bringing the cemeteries into compliance, the process for notifying stakeholders of future out-of-compliance graves will be as follows:

Cemetery crews that observe a gravesite violation will create a work order through a non-compliance form. A 30-day notice tag will be placed on the space and it will ask the family to call or go by the Cemetery Office. Photographs of the violation, as well as the headstone and violation notice, will be taken for documentation purposes. During the 30 days, administrative staff will attempt to contact the family regarding the non-compliance. If the family is reached, they are presented with an option to remove the violation, or an option allowing the grounds crew to remove it, with a due date for completion.

After 30 days, if the items are not already removed by the family, the Grounds Supervisor will assign crew members to remove the non-compliant items and tidy up the site, noting on the work order what materials were disposed of, and what materials might have been kept/stored. Thorough documentation of each non-compliance matter, from the beginning to the end, will be recorded into the Violations Excel Database which will be updated with a description of materials disposed of and materials kept, as well as the date of completion and photographs.

Below is an example of the 30 Day Notice Tag that will be placed on the graves:

30 DAY NOTICE

The items on this burial site are not in compliance with the City of Austin's Cemetery Rules & Regulations. Please review the rules at <http://austintexas.gov/department/cemeteries> and promptly remove the items. After thirty (30) days, the City will remove and dispose of any remaining items in violation. You may also contact us at the information below.

Thank you,
Cemetery Operations
Phone: (512) 978-2320
Email: cemeteries@austintexas.gov