



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES**
Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam
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How to Prepare for Interment in the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemeteries (MVMC)

- Offices open Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:00pm; except legal holidays. Committal services / burials are by appointment only Monday-Friday. Grounds open 7:00am-dusk, 7 days a week for visitation; gates may be closed in any inclement weather.
- At the time of need (when a death has occurred and burial is to be scheduled) you may have the funeral director email the following documents to us or you may submit these documents in person to our office between the hours of 8am-3:30pm, Monday-Friday (except legal holidays). An **MVMC Information Requirements for Burial and Government Monument Inscription** form must be completed at this time. **Documents are not accepted on a pre-need basis.**
- **Eligibility** is based on Military Service as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Subject to change without notice. Visit the [National Cemetery Administration](https://www.nationalcemeteryadministration.gov) website for complete eligibility requirements. Copy of **all** military service documentation for all time periods served (DD214, Title 10 Retirement letter, etc.).
 - **Military Service:**
 - The veteran was discharged or released from active-duty service (other than for training purposes) under honorable conditions. Certain exceptions do apply, **or**
 - The veteran served at least 20 years in the National Guard or United States Reserves and is in receipt of a military pension or has documentation verifying he/she will receive retirement pay at age 60, in accordance with Title 10, Chapter 1223. **or**
 - Any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies while honorably serving on active duty.
 - **Other Eligible Dependent Family:**
 - Spouse: Veteran and spouse must be legally married. Ex-spouse (by annulment or divorce) is **not** eligible. Copy of marriage certificate required. If the spouse is also a veteran, all military documentation must be provided at the time of the first interment.
 - Dependent child defined as:
 1. Unmarried minor child, under 21 years of age, or under 23 if pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution.
 2. Unmarried and became permanently physically or mentally disabled and incapable of self-support before reaching the age of 21 years, or before reaching the age of 23 years if pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution.
- Copy of birth certificate(s) or driver's license(s) or State ID(s) for veteran and eligible spouse/dependent.
- **Fees: (Subject to change without notice)**
 - There is no charge for the veteran's initial burial.
 - A fee (\$300.00 for full casket burial, \$150.00 for cremation burial) subject to change will be charged for burial of spouse and qualified dependent(s).
 - A \$200 fee, subject to change, will be charged for all dis-interments and/or re-interments. A fee may also be charged for the replacement cost to any damaged concrete crypt.

General Information

All policies, rules, regulations and procedures are subject to change without notice. Request for burial in Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemeteries (MVMC) designates acceptance of all policies, rules, regulations and procedures. For more detailed information, please contact the cemetery. Anyone disrupting a committal service or causing a disturbance on the grounds will be asked to leave the property. No exceptions will be made.

The Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemeteries focus on the adoption and enforcement of rules and regulations to ensure uniformity, protect the common interest, and preserve the beauty of the final resting places of those entrusted to our care.

The Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemeteries are dedicated to the Commonwealth's Veterans and their families as a lasting memorial and final resting place in appreciation and gratitude for their service and sacrifice to our nation.

Additional information and regulations are available on the [Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemeteries webpage](#) and at the MVMC offices.

- The Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemeteries (MVMC) will abide by all Commonwealth of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) and Federal Regulations that govern the operations of veteran cemeteries.
- At the time of need (when a death has occurred) contact the funeral director of your choosing. Any removal, transportation and/or cremation must be handled by an authorized individual.
- MVMC staff does not offer any endorsements or suggestions regarding funeral directors, florists, clergy or any other funeral professional.
- MVMC does not remove or transport decedents nor provide caskets, cremation urns or vaults, cremation of decedent, or pay for any funeral costs. MVMC Staff is only responsible for the interment process on MVMC grounds, the opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, and the installation of the government marker.
- Special ceremonies are held each Memorial Day (last Monday in May) and Veterans Day (November 11) in Agawam at 1:00pm.

Headstones and Niche Covers

- Upright granite markers will be provided for in-ground casket or cremation burials; granite niche covers will be engraved for the Columbarium Wall. Private markers are not allowed.
- Headstones/niche covers will be ordered after the interment and will strictly follow the policies, rules and regulations as set forth by the Federal VA and MVMC.
- **Only the first name, middle initial, last name, suffix will be engraved on the marker. No nicknames, professional titles, terms of endearment, graphics, emblems (other than the authorized VA emblems) or pictures will be allowed/engraved.**
- Final headstone is engraved with veteran information on front and spouse/dependent information on back.
- Veteran and spouse/dependent information are on the front of the niche cover.
- Headstones and niche covers are federal property. Altering or marking by paint, marker, lipstick or any other means, including attaching items, is considered vandalism and may be subject to penalty.

Committal Services and Gravesites

- Burial must take place in MVMC for a committal service to be conducted. All committal services (approximately 15 minutes total) are conducted in the non-sectarian chapel. Burials and committal services are held by appointment only, Monday-Friday, except on legal holidays. No gravesite or private funeral/committal services allowed on Cemetery grounds at any time.
- No unauthorized people will be allowed at the gravesite area during burials.
- Specific gravesites may not be reserved. Burial sections are **not** based on military rank, branch of service, religion, or ethnic background. Veteran and eligible spouse/dependent must be interred in the same plot unless both are veterans.
- Calling hours, gatherings, funeral services or Masses, or any other memorial ceremonies are held elsewhere.
- **No guest books, eulogies, singers, musicians, recorded music, posterboards, other presentations, commemorations, receiving lines, etc. are allowed. No balloon, butterfly or other type of releases allowed.**
- No receptions allowed at the Cemetery. No food, alcohol, or smoking allowed on grounds.
- Up to three (3) floral pieces allowed in the chapel for the committal service. Glass containers may not be placed on the gravesite. All other floral arrangements provided they conform to regulations will be set at the gravesite by cemetery staff.
- Eligible spouse/dependent may have a committal service in chapel.
- Only one (1) speaker is allowed—clergy (arranged by next-of-kin) or family member—for up to 7 minutes.
- Military honors (for veterans only) will follow speaker. Military honors consist of: If requested and available a 3-volley salute rendered by the Volunteer Firing Detail, sounding of Taps from Cemetery sound system, one burial flag folded and presented by the Veteran's branch of service. Military funeral honors will be arranged by the funeral director.
- Casket grave liner (also called a burial liner, crypt, outer burial receptacle) provided. Double liners will be used for veterans with an eligible spouse/dependent. Double casket liners will be used for veteran and spouse, with first decedent placed on the bottom of the liner and second decedent placed on shelf above first decedent.
- **All cremations must be in urns specifically designed for human remains.** It is required that 100% of the cremated remains be presented for burial. Please contact MVMC office for specific information regarding allowable urns and burial requirements.
- Per National Cemetery Administration policy, a family who chooses an [NCA Commemorative Urn or Plaque](#) will not be eligible to inter that Veteran in MVMC, Agawam or Winchendon.
- In-ground burial of cremated remains must be in an urn that will not deteriorate, break, or be made of wood. If any urn of those types is chosen, an urn vault (purchased separately) is required. No cardboard shipping boxes are allowed.
- Columbarium Wall niches are available for above-ground placement of cremated remains. Each niche is designed to hold 2-4 standard size urns. Veteran, spouse, dependent child(ren) must be interred together. Next of kin is responsible for ensuring all eligible urns fit within one niche.
- A Presidential Memorial Certificate will be issued to the next of kin by the Federal VA for all veteran burials. The Veteran will be included in the online [Veterans Legacy Memorial \(VLM\)](#) by the Federal VA.

Rules and Regulations, Floral and Grounds

- All vehicles shall respect posted speed limits, be kept to the right side of the roadways, follow the direction of the roadways, and shall not be driven or parked on the lawns or walkways.
- Plastic cone vases are available in each burial section. Vases are not to be removed from the Cemetery. Vases are, and will remain, the property of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Only vases provided by the Cemetery are allowed.
- Florists are permitted to deliver flowers to a gravesite as long as all packaging material is removed.
- All floral tributes are placed at your own risk. The Executive Office of Veterans Services or Cemetery staff are not responsible for flowers after they have been placed on gravesites or if they are damaged, lost or stolen.
- Cemetery staff will have full discretion to remove floral tributes when they become withered, faded, or otherwise unsightly. All authorized and unauthorized items placed on gravesites become the property of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery and will be removed and disposed of at the discretion of Cemetery personnel.

The placement of items on graves, other than on the day of interment, is subject to the following:

Allowed Decorations

- Fresh cut flowers are permitted at any time. Flowers must be placed in the provided plastic cone vase.
- A potted plant, no larger than 8 inches round, will be permitted on the gravesite 5 days before through 5 days after the following holidays: Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and Father's Day.
- Memorial Day – Cemetery personnel will place a United States Flag on each gravesite, traditionally, the Wednesday before the holiday and will remove the Flag the Wednesday after.
- Veterans Day – Individuals may place United States, POW/MIA or Armed Forces Service Branch flags no larger than 12x18 inches on individual gravesites from November 6th to November 12th.
- Freshly cut green wreath, with one bow, allowed from November 1st through January 15th. Wreaths must be laid on the ground in front of headstones / Wall niches. The bow must not touch the headstone as the dye will discolor the granite. Wreaths are **not** to be attached in any way to the headstone. Wreath stands are no longer permitted and will be removed by cemetery staff.

Prohibited Decorations and Activities

- No artificial flowers, cemetery logs, window boxes, or potted plants (except as stated above).
- No pinecones, branches, berries, palms, flags, potted plants/dirt in cone vases.
- No permanent plantings, floral containers, balloons, pinwheels, beverage containers, commemorative items, coins, pictures, statues, candles, flammable items of any sort, vigil lights, breakable objects, grave blankets, grave pillows, flag standards or grave medallions, etc.
- No flags (except those placed by Cemetery personnel or the Veterans Day exemption above) permitted.
- Flowers, potted plants and wreaths are not allowed to be attached to, lean against, or placed on top of a headstone or niche cover. No marking, defacing, or damaging headstones and/or niche covers in any way.
- No pets except for service animals defined by the ADA as dogs that are trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.
- No alcoholic beverages or smoking, vaping, or drug use. No littering, picnicking or public gatherings of a partisan nature. Any form of sport or recreation, including jogging and bicycle riding, is prohibited.
- Firearms and explosives are strictly prohibited on cemetery grounds unless authorized by the cemetery to conduct military honors. Hunting is also prohibited on cemetery grounds.
- No cutting, breaking, or injuring trees, shrubs, grass or other plantings.