



MAY – JUNE 2020

Orange County Cemetery District

TRUSTEES

Noel Hatch, Chair
Maribel Marroquin, Vice Chair
William E. Nelson
Kelly Rivers
Cynthia Ward

25751 Trabuco Road
Lake Forest, CA 92630
(949) 951-9102 – Phone
(949) 951-0236 - Fax
www.occemeterydistrict.com

Tim Deutsch, General Manager

COVID-19 and The Orange County Cemetery District: What You Need to Know

Without question, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) has impacted every facet of life as we know it. It has changed how we shop, how we worship, how we interact with family and friends, and even how we care for and grieve for our deceased family members.

At the Orange County Cemetery District, the Board of Trustees and staff have also had to make some difficult decisions as we do our best to comply with Federal, State, County, and local mandates and recommendations, all designed to slow the spread of this devastating pandemic.

This newsletter outlines important changes that you need to know:

CEMETERY VISITATION HOURS

The grounds at all three District cemeteries including: Anaheim Cemetery, Santa Ana Cemetery and El Toro Memorial Park remain open for visitation Monday through Friday. Santa Ana and Anaheim Cemeteries are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. El Toro Memorial Park is open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Please be advised that the grounds at all three cemeteries are completely closed for all visitation and for all interment services on Saturdays and Sundays. This will remain in effect until the restrictions requested by the County of Orange Health Officer are lifted. Closing the cemeteries for weekend visitation was a very difficult decision as we are acutely aware of how important it is to be able to spend time at a loved one's gravesite.



Signs posted in front of the office at El Toro Memorial Park advise visitors of office closures.

Visitation Guidelines

While you are visiting the cemeteries, please follow these important safety guidelines.

1. Keep groups as small as possible, ideally no more than 2 to 3 people in a group, but absolutely no more than 9 in a group.
2. Maintain a 6-foot social distance from one another and from staff.
3. Please wear a face mask.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation.

Graveside Service Restrictions

While casket burials are still taking place as an essential service, there are safety restrictions in place that families should be aware of if they are attending a graveside service.

The most important thing to know is that attendance at the gravesite is limited to a total of 9 people, which includes the officiant. Cemetery and mortuary staff are NOT included in this number. If you are not an immediate family member of the deceased, please consider sending your condolences to the family rather than attending in person. Those who do attend must maintain a six-foot social distance from all staff and ideally from each other. They should also wear face masks if at all possible.

Please also be aware that in order to encourage social distancing and to reduce the chance of virus spread between staff and families, no chairs are being provided for graveside services. Canopies will only

be provided if it is raining. If you are physically unable to stand, please make sure an able family member can assist you with providing a safe chair. Since the District cannot provide a full graveside set-up at this time, families are being charged a reduced fee for the opening and closing of the grave. Families who have paid in advance for a graveside service will receive a partial refund.

Finally, in the past, it was not uncommon for staff to assist family members as pallbearers. In order to avoid potential exposure to both families and staff, our policy now is that pall bearing must be done either entirely by the family, or entirely by cemetery staff. When District staff serve as pall bearers a lawn cart is used to make it possible for three to four staff members to safely transport the casket from the coach to the gravesite. This is provided at no additional cost to the families.

Office Closures and Suspension of All Pre-Need Sales

While staff is hard at work inside the cemetery offices, as long as the “Stay At Home” order is in place, the public will not be allowed to enter any cemetery office. Families who have experienced a death, may still call the cemetery to make arrangements and purchase space. These arrangements are being completed remotely via email, as much as possible.

In order to reduce contact between staff and families, all pre-need or advance planning purchases have been temporarily suspended. If you have already

placed a space on a thirty-day hold, rest assured that these spaces will remain on hold. Once the restrictions have lifted, staff will be calling families who have expressed an interest in purchasing interment space for future use, to set up appointments to complete those transactions.

The District is also encouraging families who have had their loved ones cremated to postpone placing the urns at the cemetery until after the pandemic passes and normal cemetery operations can resume.

Memorial Day Programs Canceled – But Veterans Still Honored



There may be no speeches, or bagpipes, or honor guard firing salutes, but the Veterans interred at all of the District Cemeteries will still be remembered and honored.

Volunteers and District staff, mindful of social distancing and limitations on gatherings, will still scour the grounds to decorate the gravesites of our Veterans with U.S. flags. The flags will be placed beginning on May 21st and will proudly fly through June 2nd. **All District cemeteries will be open for visitation on Memorial Day, May 25th, but COVID-19 visitation guidelines should be followed.**

Cemetery Assistant, Kim Eazell Makes Masks for All Staff

As an essential business all of our groundskeeping staff have maintained their full-time schedules to ensure that burials can continue and the grounds are maintained. Office staff have been splitting their time between the office and telecommuting when possible.

But one staff member, Cemetery Assistant Kim Eazell, found a vital service she could perform while working at home. She has put her sewing talents to work and has been busy producing over 100 cloth face masks.



About 75 of these masks have gone to all of the District's groundskeeping staff, office personnel, and their families. The masks are washable and can be used over and over. With such a shortage of masks around, Kim said, "I just wanted to do everything I could to make sure our guys and their families can stay as safe as possible."

We are happy to report that so far, no staff members have reported any illness. Thanks for all your hard work Kim!! It is greatly appreciated!!



Groundskeepers Francisco Cortez, Jose Avila, Adan Reyes, and Leadworker Juan Lopez-Bautista don their masks as they begin work.

Santa Ana Cemetery Announces Capital Improvement Project

At the April teleconferenced Board Meeting, the Trustees awarded a contract to Ben's Asphalt, a local Santa Ana company, in the amount of \$929,950 for the removal of the badly deteriorating asphalt curbs and roadways within Santa Ana Cemetery.

General Manager, Tim Deutsch stated that about 80% to 90% of the roads within the cemetery have issues. Ben's Asphalt will completely remove the existing asphalt and replace it with new asphalt. All of the existing asphalt curbs will be replaced with cement curbs. In addition, over the last few winters District staff have identified three areas on the grounds that consistently flood during heavy rains. This project will also include the placement of retention basins with perforated pipe drains to filter the water.

The project will be done in three phases so the cemetery does not have to be shut down entirely and should take about three to four months to complete. During construction, visitors should expect some inconveniences as various roads will be inaccessible while work is underway and may make it more difficult for families to reach gravesites. There will also be some additional noise. When interment services are occurring Staff will do their best to mitigate these issues for families. The project should begin in mid-May and be complete by early Fall.

In addition, a smaller improvement project at Santa Ana Cemetery is already underway. The installation of new swing gates is taking place that will enable staff to secure cemetery grounds separate from neighboring Fairhaven Memorial Park.

ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT

May/June Board Meetings

The Board of Trustees for the Orange County Cemetery District holds regular meetings the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. at the District Office located at 25751 Trabuco Road, Lake Forest, CA 92630. The public is welcome to attend.

Agendas are available at least 72 hours prior to each meeting and are also posted on our website at www.occemeterydistrict.com. In May and June, meetings will be held as follows:

- **Tuesday, May 5th at 10:00 a.m.**
- **Tuesday, June 2nd at 10:00 a.m.**

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact the District Secretary, Mary Funk at (949) 951-9102 ext. 110.

Flower Removal and Holiday Schedule

Every Wednesday, groundskeepers remove and discard flowers and decorations throughout all three cemeteries. Families are encouraged to remove their flowers or decorations on Tuesday night; you can then place the flowers back on the space on Wednesday afternoon. Please remember that the District policy only allows for two items to be placed on gravesites. This includes the in-ground flower vase and one other item. If gravesites exceed the number of allowed items, staff may remove and discard the excess items. Please do not leave items of great monetary or sentimental value on gravesites as the District cannot prevent theft.

Throughout the year various holidays are recognized with extended periods between flower clean-ups. During these times, we do ask that you empty the vase and place fresh water in the container every four to five days to eliminate mosquito breeding sources, which can cause serious health issues. Your cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated.



In honor of Mothers' Day, may be placed on Thursday, April 30th until Tuesday, May 19th. In honor of Memorial Day, flowers may be placed on Thursday, May 21st and should be removed by Tuesday, June 2nd. In honor of Fathers' Day and Independence Day, flowers may be placed on Thursday, June 11 until Tuesday, July 14th.

A complete listing of the District's extended holiday flower schedule for 2020 is available on our website at www.occemeterydistrict.com. Click on the tab for Flowers, Markers and Rules for more information.

CEMETERY VISITATION HOURS

All District cemeteries are open for visitation Monday through Friday.

Anaheim & Santa Ana Cemeteries are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

El Toro Memorial Park – Extended Hours

Open from 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
When Daylight Saving Time ends on Nov. 1st the park will close at 5:00 p.m.

All Offices and Grounds are closed on Saturdays and Sundays until further notice.

Our Mission Statement & Values

The Orange County Cemetery District manages and maintains Orange County's public cemeteries in a manner that preserves their beauty, dignity, historical and cultural values, and offers affordable interment service for County residents.

The Trustees and staff of the Orange County Cemetery District are committed to the following values:

- Integrity ■ Respect ■ Accountability
- Responsiveness ■ Empathy ■ Transparency
- Appreciation for Diverse Needs

