

## **Frequently Asked Questions regarding markers, niche plates and memorial name strips.**

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### **What is a temporary marker?**

After the interment (burial) takes place, most families have not yet ordered a marker (gravestone) or niche plate to permanently memorialize the interment space (gravesite). For in-ground interments, groundskeepers will place a small metal bracket at the head of the interment space. The bracket has a clear plexi-glass area with a label underneath that displays the loved one's name and interment space location. This is only meant to be a temporary indicator of the interment space so that, until a permanent marker is installed, visitors know they are at the correct location. Occasionally, temporary markers will become dislodged or covered over by the grass. If this should occur, please contact the cemetery office. They will request the groundskeepers to place a new temporary marker on the interment space. Interments taking place in our niches will use a sticker with the loved one's name and niche location to mark the exterior of the niche until a family can order a permanent niche plate. The stickers will be removed from the face of the niche when the niche plate is installed and the stickers do not harm the granite face of the niche.

### **What is a niche plate?**

A niche plate is a bronze plaque that is installed to the granite face of the niche to mark the location of an inurnment (placement of an urn within a niche). The content of the niche plate is determined by the family, but the niche plate must conform to the size requirements for each cemetery. The standard size of a niche plate is typically 5"x3" with a raised polished border, but this may vary depending on the location of the niche.

### **What is a memorial name strip?**

A memorial name strip is a small, rectangular, bronze plaque that typically has two lines of text with approximately 25 characters per line. It lists a loved one's name, date of birth and date of death. Memorial Name Strips are usually purchased by families who have loved ones interred directly in the Rose Gardens at our cemeteries. However, they can also be purchased by families even if no interment has occurred at the cemetery and the family just wishes to have a way to permanently memorialize a loved one. Memorial Name Strips are installed on large Memorial Boards near the Rose Gardens. Memorial Name Strips are purchased directly from the cemetery and cost \$230.00

### **When can a marker (gravestone), niche plate or memorial name strip be purchased?**

Markers (gravestones), niche plates and memorial name strips can be purchased at any time. If you are purchasing a marker for an in-ground interment (burial), some families choose to wait several months to give the ground time to settle after the interment has taken place. However, if you notice at any time that your marker has sunk down so the surface of the marker is below the level of the ground, you can call the cemetery or visit the cemetery office and request that the marker be raised and leveled. This is a

normal part of the marker maintenance and there is no charge for this service. Also, if you are not the owner of the interment space, please be sure that you have the consent of the owner before ordering a marker or niche plate. Owners have the right to request that a marker or niche plate be removed if they did not approve its installation. Prior to any marker or niche plate installation the purchaser of the marker or niche plate must provide the District with a completed Marker Purchase Acknowledgement and Disclosure Form. [Here is a link for the Marker Purchase Acknowledgement and Disclosure Form.](#)

### [Does the cemetery sell markers \(gravestones\), niche plates or memorial name strips?](#)

Memorial Name Strips can be ordered directly from our cemeteries, but families will need to choose the marker or memorial company of their choice to purchase a niche plate or a marker (gravestone). In addition, all markers and niche plates must conform to each cemetery's size and material requirements. [Here is a link for our marker and niche plate size requirements.](#)

[Who can purchase a marker or niche plate?](#) Public Cemetery Law states that a recorded lot/niche owner has the right to make decisions on the use and marking of the lot/niche. Before any marker or niche plate can be installed, the District must confirm who is purchasing the marker or niche plate and if that person has the consent of the lot or niche owner. The "Marker Purchase Authorization Form" must be completed by the Purchaser and provided to the cemetery office prior to any marker or niche plate installation. The form requires the purchaser to indicate that they have approval from a lot/niche owner to purchase and request that the marker be set on the lot/niche. Here is a link for the [Marker Purchase Acknowledgement and Disclosure Form.](#)

### [What are the rules regarding marker \(gravestone\) or niche plate design and size?](#)

1. No lot or space shall be defined by any architectural object or by any marker unless approved by the General Manager, his designee or other person authorized by the Board of Trustees.
2. **All markers must be placed flush with the surface of the ground. The District no longer allows upright monuments.** Exception at Santa Ana Cemetery: When a section has been completely filled (i.e. no more interments) upright monuments may be allowed at that time.
3. Flat markers shall be set flush and level with the ground and shall be installed by District employees or those acting under direction of District staff.
4. Only one marker shall be permitted on each in-ground space. Any exception must be approved by the General Manager or his designee prior to installation.

Two niche plates are allowed on each niche.

5. Only approved granite, marble or bronze markers with square, smooth edges will be accepted.
6. No marker with lettering, emblems, borders or other designs raised more than 3/8" above the surface of the marker will be accepted.
7. If you are placing a picture on a marker, the family must sign a "Waiver of Damages to Photographs" form and deliver or mail it to the cemetery office prior to the installation of the marker. The District will not set a marker with a picture if the waiver has not been completed and submitted. Photos can become loose and separate from the marker and be damaged by equipment. Neither the Cemetery District nor its employees are responsible for photos which become loose and may be damaged. Click [here](#) for a copy of the "Waiver of Damages to Photographs" form.
8. Effective May 15, 2015, the District will no longer be placing cement borders around any markers or accepting markers with cement borders from marker companies. (The only exception is if the District has already accepted payment for it in advance.) Families interested in a border are encouraged to ask their marker company to do a faux, sanded or etched border at the time they place their order with their marker company.
9. [Here is a link to view our marker specification size requirements.](#)
10. Once a marker or niche plate is delivered, District staff will verify that the marker or niche plate setting fee has been paid and then set the marker or niche within 10-21 business days, as the interment schedule allows. In some instances, it may take longer than this to set the marker.

\*Pursuant to Section 9052(d) of the California Health and Safety Code, it is unlawful for any employee or officer of the cemetery district to engage in the selling of monuments and markers.

### **How long will it take to get my loved one's marker (gravestone)?**

Once the design is finalized with the marker company of your choice, it typically takes most marker companies between six to eight weeks to create the marker. Marker companies will ship or deliver the marker or niche plate directly to the cemetery. Once we receive it, it can take anywhere from 10 to 21 business days to install it at the interment space (gravesite), depending on the number of services going on, the number of markers or niche plates already waiting to be installed, and staff availability. Cemetery staff will call the person who made arrangements for the interment when the

marker or niche plate installation is complete. Please keep in mind, that no markers or niche plates will be installed if the setting fee has not been paid, if the Marker Purchase Authorization Form is not on file with the cemetery office, or if there is a photograph on the marker and a “Waiver to Damages of Photographs” form has not been signed. [Here is a link for the Marker Purchase Authorization and Disclosure Form.](#) [Here is a link for the Photo Waiver Form.](#)

### **How long does it take to install a marker (gravestone) or niche plate once the cemetery has received it?**

Once we receive the marker or niche plate from your marker/memorial company, it typically takes anywhere from 10 to 21 business days for cemetery staff to install it at the interment space (gravesite), depending on the number of services going on, the number of markers and niche plates already waiting to be installed, and staff availability. Cemetery staff will call the person who made arrangements for the interment when the marker or niche plate installation is complete. Please keep in mind, that no markers or niche plates will be installed if the setting fee has not been paid, or if the Marker Purchase Authorization Form is not on file with the cemetery office, or if there is a photograph on the marker and a “Waiver to Damages of Photographs” form has not been signed. [Here is a link to the Marker Purchase Authorization and Disclosure Form.](#) [Here is a link for the Photo Waiver Form.](#)

### **What is the marker (gravestone) setting fee and the niche plate setting fee?**

These are fees that are charged to cover the cost for the installation of an in-ground marker (gravestone) at an interment space (gravesite), or a niche plate to be installed on the face of a niche. The in-ground marker setting fee for our two standard size markers (24”x12” and 28”X16”) is \$210.00. The installation of one in-ground flower vase is \$30.00. An over-sized Marker (32”x20”) is \$315.00. The niche plate setting fee is \$115.00. For niche interments, there is a one-time charge of \$12.00 for use of niche vases.

### **What is the bronze marker base fee?**

A bronze marker by itself is not strong enough to support the weight of mowers or other vehicles that may pass over. Therefore, it is necessary to install a concrete base under the marker to support and strengthen it. The bronze marker base fee covers the cost to supply and attach the concrete base that will support the bronze marker. You can also order a granite base from your marker vendor, but it must conform to the size requirements for markers. Your vendor should attach the bronze marker to the granite base before it is delivered to the cemetery.

### **What is a “Waiver to Damages of Photographs” form?**

If you choose to have a photo tile attached to your marker (gravestone) or niche plate, the cemetery will not take responsibility for the condition or maintenance of the photo tile. For example, should any damage occur to the photo tile because it has become

loose from the gravestone, should the photo tile fade or become discolored, or should it get lost because it has become dislodged from the marker, the cemetery will not be responsible for repair or replacement of the photo tile. Markers or niche plates that have photo tiles attached will not be installed until the family has signed a "Waiver to Damages of Photographs" form acknowledging this. To view of copy of the form, please click [here](#).

### **Can I install the marker (gravestone) or niche plate myself?**

No. Installations cannot be done by private parties. Only approved cemetery staff can install markers (gravestones), niche plates or memorial name strips, and all setting fees must be paid before staff will complete the installation. If a marker is illegally installed, staff will immediately remove the marker or niche plate and place it in the maintenance yard until the family pays the marker setting fee. At that time, staff will properly install it, provided it meets the District's size and material requirements.

### **Can I witness the installation of the marker (gravestone) or niche plate?**

No, the District does not allow families to schedule the witnessing of marker or niche plate installations. Markers and niche plates are normally installed by groundskeeping staff when time allows, as priority must be given to the preparation of gravesites, conducting interments, and keeping maintenance schedules on track.

### **How many markers are allowed on a gravesite?**

District policy allows for one gravestone for each in-ground space and two niche plates for each niche. Any exception must be approved by the Cemetery Manager or his designee prior to installation. If a second marker is approved, the marker installation fee must be paid prior to installation. In addition, a Second Marker Endowment Care Fee of \$75.00 must be paid to cover the additional maintenance required by the second marker.

### **How many niche plates are allowed on a niche?**

District policy allows for two niche plates for each niche space. Any exception must be approved by the Cemetery Manager or his designee prior to installation.

### **Are cement borders allowed for markers (gravestones)?**

Cement borders are no longer allowed. Over time, we have found that cement borders crack and separate from markers. This policy has been in effect since May 15, 2015. Cement borders that were purchased for advance planning prior to May 15, 2015 will still be allowed. If families desire the "picture frame" look that a cement border provides, we are allowing marker companies to apply a two-inch sanded, etched or faux border to the marker. If families choose a two-inch sanded border, they can increase the size of the stone to accommodate the border. For example, if the family wants a gravestone with a design area of 24"x12", but they want the look of a cement border, they should order a marker that is 28"x16" and have the marker company apply the two-inch sanded

border. Similarly, if a design area of 28"x16" is desired with a two-inch faux border, they should order a gravestone that is 32"x20". Please keep in mind that the marker setting fee for all 32"x20" markers is \$315.

### **When will my flower vase be installed?**

Flower vases are installed at the same time the marker (gravestone) is installed. We do not install vases ahead of the marker's arrival because we do not know what size of marker to expect and the vase needs to be positioned accordingly with the marker. Vases cannot be placed above the gravestone, as this area is the foot of another person's interment space (gravesite).

### **How many flower vases are allowed on a gravesite?**

A maximum of two flower vases are allowed on each gravesite. Any exceptions to this must be approved in advance by the Cemetery Manager.

### **What is a flower vase setting fee?**

If a family would like a second flower vase placed at the site, and they pay the \$30.00 fee for the second vase before the marker is installed, there is no additional flower vase installation fee. However, if a family decides they want a second flower vase after the marker and first flower vase have already been installed, then they must pay for the cost of the second vase (\$30.00), plus a \$65.00 vase setting fee. The \$65.00 vase setting fee is charged because in this situation, in order to install the second flower vase, the first flower vase must be removed and repositioned and the lawn repaired at the site of the first installation, so both vases are centered evenly beneath the marker.

### **Can I have my vase or vases set in a vase block?**

Yes. A vase block is a granite square with a hole drilled in the center that fits an in-ground flower vase. The vase block must be purchased through the marker or memorial company of your choice. The vase may be purchased either at the cemetery for \$30.00, or through your marker/memorial company. The dimensions of a vase block must be 10"x10" and it must be three inches thick. If you are using a vase purchased from one of our cemeteries, the center hole must be drilled so that it is 4 ½" in diameter. Before a vase block is installed, a \$65.00 vase block setting fee must be paid for each vase block installed. A maximum of two vase blocks are allowed per gravesite.

### **What is a vase block setting fee?**

Before a vase block is installed, a \$65.00 vase block setting fee must be paid for each vase block that is to be installed. A maximum of two vase blocks are allowed per gravesite. This fee covers the cost for the groundskeepers to prepare the gravesite and install the vases(s) and vase block(s).



### **My in-ground flower vase(s) is covered, stuck or missing. What do I do?**

If you are experiencing any problems with your in-ground flower vase, please notify the cemetery office. We can generate a maintenance request for the groundskeepers to clean out, repair, or if necessary, replace your in-ground vase. There is no fee for this and is a part of our normal maintenance. Groundskeepers do their best to respond to maintenance requests in a timely manner, but depending on staff availability and the number of interments taking place, completion of these requests can take up to ten to fifteen business days.

### **My niche vase is gone. What do I do?**

If a niche vase is not in use, groundskeepers will remove empty vases. We have found that if we remove vases when they are not in use, it increases the amount of time these vases last before having to be replaced, as the sun has a tendency to bake the vases and they crack. If you are visiting a loved one and no vase is on your niche, you can use any unused vase on other niches. If you are visiting the grounds Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. niche vases may also be picked up in the cemetery office. If you are planning to come on a weekend when the office is closed, you can call during the week and request that we place an empty vase on your niche space.

### **Can I have a marker or plaque installed in the Rose Garden at the site of my loved one's interment (burial)?**

Due to the large number of interments (burials) located in our Rose Gardens, it is not practical to allow individual markers or plaques in the actual Rose Gardens. However, near each Rose Garden there are Memorial Plaques that display Memorial Name Strips. Memorial Name Strips are approximately 1" in height and 6" in length and have room for two lines of text with about 25 characters per line. The first row of text typically lists the deceased loved one's name. The second line of text normally lists that person's date of birth and date of death. Memorial Name Strips can be purchased directly at each Cemetery Office and cost \$230.00. Please allow four to eight weeks for delivery of your Memorial Name Strip to the Cemetery. The fee includes the installation of the Memorial Name Strip.

### **How do I order a Memorial Name Strip?**

Memorial Name Strips can be purchased directly at each Cemetery Office and cost \$230.00. Please allow four to eight weeks for the delivery of your Memorial Name Strip to the cemetery. The fee includes the installation of the Memorial Name Strip.

### **Do I have to have a loved one interred in the Rose Garden in order to purchase a memorial name strip?**

No. If you want to have a place to permanently memorialize a loved one who has passed away, you can purchase a Memorial Name Strip and have it installed at any of our District cemeteries, even if no interment on our properties has taken place.

### **How do I order a military marker from the Veterans Administration?**

If your loved one was a veteran and you would like to order a military marker from the Veterans Administration, please click [here](#) for a copy of the application (VA Form 40-1330) that you will need to complete and return to the cemetery office. You can also contact the Cemetery Office and we can mail you a copy of the application form. In addition to the completion of Form 40-1330, you will need to submit appropriate military discharge documents (typically a copy of the deceased Veteran's discharge certificate – Form DD 214) or related service information as outlined in the form's instructions. Copies of these documents and the completed form should be returned to the Cemetery Manager. He will review the form, sign off on it as well, and submit it to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Once the application is submitted it can take anywhere from two to six months for the cemetery to receive the military marker from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

### **My marker (gravestone) has sunk down and is collecting mud and water on the surface. What can I do?**

Occasionally issues can arise with our irrigation sprinkler systems, or markers (gravestones) may sink due to settling of the soil. If your marker is collecting mud or debris, or if your interment space (gravesite) seems swampy, please inform the cemetery office. A maintenance request can be generated so groundskeepers and/or our Irrigation Specialist can be made aware of the problem and work to provide a solution. In most cases, this requires that the marker be raised and relevelled. This is a part of normal maintenance and no fee is charged.

### **My gravestone is overgrown. Can I request that the marker (gravestone) be trimmed?**

Yes. While our groundskeepers do their best to keep interment spaces (gravesites) and markers (gravestones) well maintained, sometimes markers can become overgrown. If you see that this is occurring, please contact the Cemetery Office so that we can generate a maintenance request for our groundskeepers. There is no charge for this service as the trimming of markers is a part of our regular maintenance. Please keep in mind that sometimes it can take a week or more for groundskeepers to complete a maintenance request, particularly if there are a large number of interments (burials) taking place. If you are planning a special visit with family or friends, please initiate this maintenance request at least one week prior to your planned visit.

### **My gravestone has a green or yellow residue on it. Will this damage my marker?**

Periodically, groundskeepers spray around each gravestone with weed killer. The overspray can leave either a green or yellow residue on gravestones. Please do not try to clean this off. The products are designed so that the sun's UV rays will make this residue dissipate on its own within a couple of days.

**I want to replace an old marker (gravestone) with a new one. How do I do that and what does it cost?**

You will need to contact the marker or memorial company of your choice to purchase the new marker. Please be sure that the new marker meets the Cemetery's size and material requirements. If you purchase a marker that does not meet our material or size requirements, it will not be installed. You must also pay the Marker Replacement fee of \$145.00. This covers the cost for our groundskeepers to remove and dispose of the existing marker and replace it with the new one when it is received.

**Can I purchase a bench?**

The installation of new benches is no longer allowed at any of the District Cemeteries. All available space is now being designated for interment space (burial space) or is already a part of each Cemetery's landscaping plan. The only exception to this is for those who pre-paid the bench setting fee prior to this policy being put in place on July 2, 2015.