

Newtown Friends Meeting Burial Grounds Policies

graveyard@newtownfriendsmeeting.org

The Newtown Friends Meeting Burial Grounds is located at 219 Court Street, Newtown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Burial rights are available for members or long-term attenders. Anyone interested in reserving a burial site should contact the burial ground liaisons to discuss availability and location options.

The burial grounds are divided into four sections: **Section 1 East** is located southeast of the meetinghouse, **Section 1 West** is located southwest of the meetinghouse, **Section 2** is located northeast of the meetinghouse and **Section 3** is located east of the meetinghouse. All sections except Section 1 East are open for burials.

Once a location has been selected, a burial rights reservation form should be completed and returned to the burial ground liaisons along with a check made out to Newtown Monthly Meeting for the required contribution amount. Upon completion of this process, a Certificate of Burial Right will be issued.

Choosing a Plot

Choosing the size and location of a plot is based on the anticipated method of interment. All caskets must be enclosed in a concrete vault, the cost of which is the responsibility of the family; vaults are not needed for urns. A contribution to the perpetual care fund shall be made to secure burial rights. Rates for members and longtime attenders are currently set at \$375 for half size plots, and \$750 for vintage and full-size plots. Rates are doubled for non-members.

- ❖ Section 1 West plots are variable vintage size but generally measure 3' x 7 ½' and accommodate a single casket or up to 4 urns, depending upon the number of anticipated monuments on the plot.
- ❖ Section 2 plots are full size, measuring 3' x 10' and accommodate a single casket, 6 urns, or both, providing the casket was interred first.
- ❖ Section 3 plots are half size measuring 3½' x 5' and accommodate up to 3 urns.

Arranging for a Burial

An administrative fee of \$150 for research and recordkeeping, measuring and marking the gravesite, coordinating with the funeral director, gravedigger and monument company is due when the burial takes place. This fee shall apply to each burial in the plot and shall be deposited into the perpetual care fund.

For all casket and urn burials the family must employ the services of the Meeting-approved gravedigger with payment due at the time of interment. If only ashes are to be interred, the family may take responsibility for the burial themselves. All burials must have a member of the Building and Grounds committee present at the interment. A burial permit or certificate of cremation is to be received by a meeting representative on or before the time of the burial.

Headstone Guidelines

Headstones should be installed within a year; however, a headstone is not required. The maximum number of headstones is two per plot, except in Section 3 where only a single flat headstone can be accommodated. Careful consideration of the implications of future burials should be made at the time of headstone purchase.

Headstones should be simple in form, consistent with other surrounding headstones and must be set on an appropriate base. All foundations shall be installed by a meeting-approved contractor and paid for in advance. Natural stone such as granite, marble or limestone is recommended.

Coordination of headstone placement and changes to existing headstones takes place between the monument company and the burial ground liaisons, who will ensure that the company chosen is in possession of a copy of the burial ground policies. All headstone designs must be reviewed to ensure compliance with current practice. A meeting representative must be present during headstone placement.



Section 1 West: Headstones should be uniform in depth from top to bottom and should not exceed 19" wide x 12 ½" high x 4 ½" horizontal thickness at the base. The base should be installed flush with the ground and the headstone set on top. If several urns are interred in one plot, it is suggested that two names appear on the upright stone and any additional names be inscribed on a flat stone laid over the grave directly in front of the upright headstone and set flush with the ground.

Section 2: Headstones should not exceed 24" wide x 14" high x 8" horizontal thickness at the base. If several urns are anticipated being interred in one grave, families should either plan for the inclusion of more names on the original headstone, or place a flat stone inscribed with the additional names, set flush to the ground and laid over the grave directly in front of the upright headstone.



Section 3: Headstones must be placed flush with the ground with a maximum size of 24" long x 18" wide x 6" deep into the ground. Only one headstone per grave is permitted.



Plantings and Other Tributes

In keeping with Quaker testimonies of simplicity, equality and respect for the earth, fresh flowers are welcome but plastic flowers, flowerpots, wind chimes and solar lights are not permitted. Trees, shrubs and flowers may not be planted on individual plots. Fresh cut flowers will be removed after a reasonable length of time.

Wreaths and other small seasonal decorations may be put out for holidays provided they do not contain any plastic or other non-biodegradable material. The American Legion places metal flag holders and flags on the graves of those Friends who chose to participate in armed conflicts. Flags are removed at the discretion of the Meeting.

Transfer of Burial Rights

Newtown Meeting retains ownership of the burial ground and plots. Burial rights may not be resold or transferred without written approval from the Meeting. Burial rights are granted for a period of 30 years; these rights shall be deemed abandoned and revert back to the Meeting if no interments are made within this time frame. These rights can be extended for an additional 30 years through arrangement with the burial ground liaisons. Families who wish to donate toward the upkeep and improvement of the burial grounds may consult with the burial ground liaisons or Clerk of the meeting.

The Building and Grounds Committee of the Meeting has oversight of the burial grounds with burial ground liaisons coordinating all aspects of activity. The Burial Grounds liaisons, together with the Building and Grounds Committee, shall have the authority to waive all or any portion of these regulations and policies at their discretion.