

# Town of Blue Hill

## Cemetery Rules and Regulations

Blue Hill's three municipal cemeteries, Founders, Seaside and Mountain View, are intended to be quiet, sacred places where those who have passed away can rest in peace and/or be memorialized and remembered. Visitors are welcome but are expected to treat these places with respect.

**Ownership.** The Town of Blue Hill is the owner and manager of these cemeteries. It has and continues to lay out lots that can be used for burials. Persons can purchase the right to use a lot or lots for themselves and/or family members.

**General Maintenance.** The Town provides for the general maintenance of the cemeteries, including lawns, roads, and trees, paid for from appropriations of property tax revenue and the sale of cemetery lots, supplemented by income from a perpetual care fund and by donations.

**Monument Maintenance.** The ongoing maintenance of monuments placed in the cemeteries is the primary responsibility of the person or persons who had it placed and family members of the deceased. However, if no such persons are known and a monument needs repair, the Town may make such repairs or obtain a replacement marker. Pursuant to Maine law, the Town is responsible for keeping in good condition and repair the grave sites of veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States.

**Purchase of Lot Burial Rights.** Any person can purchase exclusive burial rights to an available lot in the Seaside or Mountain View Cemeteries. No lots are available in the Founders Cemetery. Purchases can be made at the Town Office from the Town Clerk. Both full size lots for caskets/vaults and smaller lots for cremains are available. A map of each cemetery showing the available lots and fee schedule can be obtained at the Town Office. The fee is used to help with the maintenance costs of the cemeteries. Each lot will be suitably marked at its corners at ground level upon completion of the purchase.

**Transfer and Non-Use of Lot Burial Rights.** The burial rights in a lot shall not be transferred except back to the Town of Blue Hill, and any such transfer may be subject to an administrative fee. Pursuant to Maine law, if a lot has not been used for interment purposes for 75 consecutive years and if the record purchaser of the burial rights has failed to provide for the care and maintenance of the lot for 75 consecutive years, the Town has the right to resell the burial right in the lot.

**Interments.** The Town's Cemetery Sexton must be notified of any planned interment of a casket vault or cremains in any cemetery lot and must approve the location of and guide the interment. Caskets must be held within a concrete vault for burial, unless the interment occurs in an area set aside by the Select Board for vault-free burials. In Seaside Cemetery, interment of casket vaults is permitted only in lots numbered 1-140 (as shown on the cemetery lot map); cremains may be interred in any lot with available space. The cost of the interment, including the opening and closing of the grave site, shall be the responsibility of the family or the estate of the deceased. Interments are only permitted between May 1 and November 15 of each year.

**New Monuments.** A monument identifying the deceased or the deceased's family must be located on the burial lot no later than one year after the initial interment on that lot. The purchase of monuments on individual lots is the responsibility of the purchaser of the burial rights or the family or the estate of the deceased. Monuments shall be no higher than three and one-half (3 1/2) feet above the ground and shall be no closer than six (6) inches to any lot boundary. Flat, ground level monuments are encouraged as they reduce the cost of lawn maintenance. The Sexton must approve the placement of all monuments.

**Flowers and other monument decorations.** Remembering and honoring the deceased with flowers beside a monument is welcomed. Any pots holding flowers or any other decorations may be removed by Town maintenance staff or contractors at any time.

**Plantings.** The planting of trees, shrubs, or other woody plants is prohibited. Flowering non-woody plants may be planted close to a monument subject to the understanding that plants may be mown or damaged in the maintenance of the cemetery.

**Visitor Use.** Respectful and appropriate use of the cemeteries by visitors is welcome between sunrise and sunset; the cemeteries are closed from sunset to sunrise. Appropriate use includes walking only on the internal roads. Because the internal roads are narrow with older monuments located close to the roads, vehicular traffic is discouraged except for those with physical disabilities. Large, wide-wheelbase trucks shall not be used on the cemetery roads. During the winter months, the cemeteries (other than designated parking areas) are closed to all vehicles.

**Pets are prohibited.** No pets are allowed in the Town cemeteries at any time.

**Cemetery Sexton.** The Sexton is a Town employee who is responsible for overseeing the Town's cemeteries and managing their use for burials. The Sexton can be contacted through the Town Office or directly via contact information available on the Town's website.

**Consistency with Maine statutes.** These rules and regulations are intended to be consistent with Maine law, including the Maine Human Rights Act. The provisions of 13 M.R.S. § 1031 *et seq.* on matters not set out in these rules and regulations also apply to the Town's cemeteries.

*Approved and adopted by the Town of Blue Hill's Select Board on September 18, 2023 and amended by the Select Board May 28, 2024.*