

## Frequently Asked Questions

The proposed rules are less restrictive and more safety oriented than the current rules adopted in 1978. The current rules were not consistently enforced which resulted in safety hazards, constrained maintenance, and inconsistent practices. Before implementing equal enforcement, we have taken the opportunity to update the language and incorporate current needs and practices. Special considerations were made to accommodate as many of the grieving practices as possible in a safe and fair manner.

We agree that people should be able to grieve in the manner of their choosing. The intent of rules in a public setting is to protect the rights of all customers while providing a safe and accessible environment.

**Q:** Why are the rules being updated?

**A:** The City of Austin Cemeteries are under the 1978 rules; **Resolution 780504-22**. City Council directed and authorized staff to adopt rules by a prescribed process by approving City Code Section 10-1-2. City Council set out the process for the adoption of rules under City Code Chapter 1-2. PARD is acting within its authority outlined in the City Code and Council Resolution.

The community input on the rules has been extensive and dates to 2013. The current proposed rules are a result of all of that feedback.

**Q:** Are benches allowed and will the ones already in the cemetery be allowed to remain?

**A:** These rules are intended to address those memorials and benches which were not approved by the City, while still allowing for cultural and religious expression. Memorial benches can be a meaningful way to honor a deceased loved one while offering a restful spot for people to sit.

1. Benches are more than welcome; however, we require that they be placed at the head as a memorial.
2. 14.4.9-Memorials-(G) Benches installed prior to the adoption of these Rules may remain in place if they satisfy the requirements of (B) and (D)(1) above and are in a safe and stable condition as determined by Cemetery Operations in its sole discretion. Benches that do not meet these criteria may be removed without further notice.

**Q:** Is ornamentation allowed?

**A:** Based on the feedback outlined in 14.4.10-Ornamentation and Decoration; ornamentation will be permitted with restrictions to ensure the safety of individuals coping with a loss and the staff tasked with maintaining the cemeteries. The intent is to allow for cultural and religious expression.

**Q:** How will the rules be enforced?

**A:** Sixty days prior to the clean-up day, large signs will be placed at the entrances of all five City of Austin cemeteries, and small signs will be posted throughout the cemeteries. All attempts will be made to contact stakeholders by media release, via email, Facebook, City of Austin website, Next Door and Twitter and contact process will be repeated at thirty days.

We understand implementing these rules pose challenges and we are more than willing to discuss individual needs with the understanding that we must preserve the rights of all customers and provide overall safety. With the updated rules and a continuous open line of communication, we hope to be able to better serve our community.

**Q:** How will “Out of Compliance” items be addressed after the cemeteries are cleaned-up?

**A:** The items will be flagged based on the “Out of Compliance” with an **IMMEDIATE REMOVAL NOTICE** or a **30-DAY NOTICE**.

### **IMMEDIATE REMOVAL NOTICE**

**Due to an interment service, monument setting and/or safety hazard, items at this gravesite have been removed. It may be retained temporarily at Austin Memorial Park Cemetery. Please contact the City of Austin Cemeteries Office for more information.**

### **30 DAY NOTICE**

**This burial site are in violation of the City of Austin’s Cemetery Rules & Regulations. Please review the rules at <http://austintexas.gov/departments/cemeteries> and promptly remove the items. Thirty (30) days from the date of this notice, the City will remove and dispose of any remaining items in violation.**