Foreword

The Town of Reading Home Rule charter adopted on March 24, 1986 and amended November 13, 2004 provides that:

"The Board of Cemetery Trustees shall be responsible for the preservation, care, improvement and embellishment of the Town's cemeteries and burial lots therein and such other powers and duties given to the Board of Cemetery Trustees under the Constitution and General Laws of the Commonwealth, by the Charter, by bylaw or by Town Meeting vote."

Working under this charge, the Board of Cemetery Trustees strives not only to fulfill its legal responsibilities regarding the Town's cemeteries, but also to preserve the aesthetic quality of our heritage. The Trustees encourage public comment at regularly schedule meetings or via correspondence.

TOWN OF READING
CEMETERY REGULATIONS

The Board of Cemetery Trustees has set forth the following rules and regulations for the ownership, use and care of burial sites in the Town's cemeteries. The authority to do this is found in Chapter 114 of Massachusetts General Laws.

RESIDENT REQUIREMENTS

1. The sale of lots is limited to current Reading residents only.

OWNERSHIP OF LOTS

2. The Trustees shall set the price of lots. All lots must be paid in full at the time of the sale.

3. The owner of a lot is limited to burying human remains in that site. The owner has a right to place a memorial subject to limitations as outlined in other sections of these regulations.

4. When a lot is purchased, the owner will be issued a deed specifying the location and dimensions of the lot. The Trustees are responsible for corner posts set at each lot. These will clearly define the number of the lot. The deed will contain certain terms and conditions for the use of this lot.

Copies of lost deeds may be obtained by paying an established fee.

5. The owner of a lot may only transfer ownership of that lot by deed if such transfer is approved by the Trustees. A fee will be charged for the recording of deed transfer. The owner does not have a right to lease the property.

6. Lots may be resold only to the Town of Reading, at the original purchase price.

7. Upon the death of the lot owner, ownership shall pass as provided by the statutes of Massachusetts in force at that time. The Trustees will require proof of the rights of ownership of such lot.

CARE OF LOTS

8. The Trustees shall require certain deposits to be made at the time of sale for perpetual care of the lot or grave without expense to the Town.

"Perpetual Care" means the cutting of grass on the grave or lot at reasonable intervals, raking and cleaning, reseeding and other work as may be necessary to keep the lot or lots in good condition. Perpetual care will not include the repairing or replacing of memorials.

MEMORIALS

9. A memorial may be installed on a lot. The Trustees must approve the design and specifications for any memorial. Flat markers shall be of granite or bronze; upright memorials shall be of granite. No other materials shall be allowed.

10. Where permitted only one upright memorial of granite may be placed on a lot subject of limitations as outlined in other sections of these regulations. One flat marker may be set on an individual grave. Markers may not be set to embrace two or more graves. All markers shall be set flush with the ground. The foundations for all memorials will be installed by the Cemetery Department and a fee will be charged.

11. In Laurel Hill, a memorial will not be installed unless the lot is endowed with perpetual care. On old lots matching markers may be used if existing markers exceed regulation size. If upright headstones become broken or excessively tipped, the right is reserved to lay these into the ground as flat markers.

12. Neither the Trustees nor the Town shall be liable for damage to memorials or markers.

13. A stone cutter or other person who is to do work on a structure erected on a lot or grave must obtain a written permit from the Cemetery Director before beginning work. Work must be performed under the supervision of the Director. The work area must be left in proper condition.

14. An owner of a lot or lots does not have the right to plant trees, shrubs or plants on the lot(s). Nor does the owner have the right to erect a fence, curbing, hedge or any other landmark. The Trustees have the right to remove any shrub, hedge, root or branch that they may deem detrimental to other cemetery lots. The Trustees also have the right to remove unsightly flowers, old vases and other containers that may present an unsafe condition or be detrimental to the looks of the lot or the cemetery in general. No vigil lights or wooden crosses will be allowed on any lot or grave.

MEMORIAL REGULATIONS

15. The following regulations are for upright memorials. These limitations must be followed or the memorial may not be erected.

On a two grave lot, maximum size 3'0"x 1'0" base, 3' high.
On a three grave lot, maximum size 4'0"x 1'3" base, 3' high.
On a four grave lot, maximum size 4'6"x 1'6" base, 4' high.
On a five grave lot, maximum size 4'6"x 1'6" base, 4' high.
On a six grave lot, maximum size 5'x 2' base, 4' high.
On a seven grave lot, maximum size 5'6"x 2' base, 4' high.
On an eight grave lot, maximum size 6'x 2' base, 4' high.
On a single grave, only a flat marker is allowed.

Unless otherwise noted all markers shall be 2’ x 1’, and shall be of bronze or granite. Baby grave markers shall be 1’3” x 0’8”. Granite markers shall be consistently 4” thick.

In all veteran sections, grave markers shall only be of bronze.

SPECIAL REGULATIONS FOR CHARLES LAWN MEMORIAL PARK

16. No upright memorial will be allowed on lots within this cemetery. Each individual or extra depth grave space may have a flush marker. A central marker will be allowed on lots of two or more burial spaces. This will be no larger than 3’ x 1’.

17. Floral decorations are limited to one pot of 8 inches in diameter per grave.

URN GARDENS AT FOREST GLEN AND CHARLES LAWN

18. Two cremation urns may be interred in each grave.

19. Memorialization will be limited to one 2'x1' bronze flush marker in Forest Glen. Granite or bronze markers may be used in Charles Lawn.

INTERMENTS AND REMOVALS

20. No interment may be made before (a) a permit is issued by the Board of Health to the Director, (b) the owner of the lot gives an order to use the lot, and (c) all fees have been paid.

21. The Director must be given reasonable advance notice of an interment or removal. This notice must give the lot number, the grave number, name and age of deceased for a burial, size of box and name of the undertaker in charge. Neither the Director nor the trustees will be held responsible for any error in the given notice (including any order given by phone).

Fees for opening graves, making and recording interments, reinterments, funerals after working hours or Saturday or holidays as well as other services will be established by the Trustees and shall be paid in advance.

22. Funerals will not be allowed on Sundays, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day nor Christmas Day.

23. All burial cases must be sectional concrete or monolithic containers.

24. In each regular grave space, one regular interment plus one cremation urn or two cremation urns will be allowed, except extra depth lots in Charles Lawn, where provisions have been made for two burials in one grave space.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

25. All funeral processions in the cemetery are under the direction and control of the Director.

26. No firearms are allowed in any cemetery except for military and memorial services.

27. Vehicles, except for those in a funeral, procession, may be excluded from any cemetery. Maximum speed limit in any cemetery is fifteen miles per hour.

28. All persons walking through a cemetery must keep to the pathways and not trespass on lots except for gaining access to their own lots. Parents must take full responsibility for their children and not permit them to climb on headstones. Loitering, playing and dogs are not allowed.

29. Unauthorized gravestone rubbing is not allowed.

30. Cemeteries are open from sunrise to one half hour after sunset.

31. The soliciting of business by anyone within the cemetery is prohibited.

32. No employee shall receive any fee or gratuity from any person except the standard fees prescribed by the Trustees and to be paid to the Town. Any employee violating this rule will be subject to disciplinary action.

33. The Trustees shall have authority to grant to owners to depart in special instances from the provisions of the foregoing regulations in cases where it clearly appears that the spirit and intent of the regulation will not thereby be violated.