

Cemetery Etiquette

A cemetery is a unique place. While it is part of the everyday scene, it is not part of everyday life. That is to say, it is a place where tranquility and quiet are the desired norm, and activities of everyday life should be suspended.

Making the Most of This Unique Place

Cemetery visitors should:

Be sympathetic.

Do not play loud music in cars, with the windows down, for everyone to hear.

Keep children in 'check.'

No running, yelling, or rolling around on the ground. This is not a place for childhood games. Don't let them play on any of the monuments. While it is good to get children used to paying respects at a cemetery, they often don't fully understand the meaning of everything in the cemetery.

Do their best to not walk over the graves.

Common sense leads you to know the basic shape of a grave; walk in between the headstones, and don't stand on top of a burial place.

Follow cemetery rules.

Most have a sign near the entrance stating hours, rules about decorations, etc. Obey these rules. Rules about decorations serve to make sure the cemetery doesn't collect too much debris that the caretakers need to clean up. Flowers and other things can blow in the wind. It would be especially nice if any trash along the way was picked up, regardless of who left it.

Try not to remain in the cemetery after dark.

Most cemeteries are open from dawn to dusk.

Don't litter.

This creates extra work for the caretakers, and shows disrespect to the other families who come to mourn their loved ones. "Pack your trash" is a good rule of thumb: take your refuse with you when you go, or put it in trash receptacles.

Leash your pets.

When you bring your pets, be sure to clean up after them.

Follow the roadways and don't drive on the grass.

Drive slowly and obey any traffic signs posted in the cemetery. Be careful to avoid any people since they might be upset and not paying complete attention to where they are going.

Be respectful.

Keep the volume of voices down, and don't use offensive language.

Don't be overly friendly when talking to strangers.

Other visitors may want to be alone.

Don't touch any monuments or gravestones.

They are very meaningful to the families who placed them there. Some older memorials might be in disrepair and might fall apart under the slightest touch.

Don't take photos of other people or other funerals.

This is a very private time for people. It's best to steer clear of any funerals occurring, and don't get in the way of funeral processions.