

CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM CEMETERY POLICIES

All rules and regulations governing the Temple Freda Cemetery (Lots 1, 2, 31, 32, 33 and 34 of Block No. 20) of the Bryan City Cemetery should be in accordance with the religious principles of Congregation Beth Shalom (CBS) and Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). The following cemetery policies are recommended by CBS Cemetery Committee and adopted by the Board of Directors on March 22, 2015.

URJ burial and bereavement guidelines are available:

<<http://urj.org/life/family/bereavement/>>

<www.reformjudaism.org/preparing-jewish-funeral-guide>

<www.reformjudaism.org/practice/lifecycle-and-rituals/death-mourning>

I) CBS CEMETERY PLOT-ACQUISITION

A. CBS Contact Person(s)

1. CBS President

- a. First contact may be via CBS's secretary, web master, or other venue that someone tries to contact the Synagogue. They should refer the inquirer to the Synagogue's available officer. In turn, that person should acknowledge the inquiry and respond using the cemetery policy guidelines, (Section B) then forward the inquiry to the chair of the Cemetery Committee for follow-up.
- b. Cemetery policy updates approved by the Board should be issued to the congregation, outside inquirers, and to the president or available head officer.
- c. Permission and signature authority for a plot deed or agreement to buy, is authorized by the President to an authorized officer or Chair of the Cemetery Committee.

2. Chair, Cemetery Committee

- a. The Chair of CBS Cemetery Committee or designated Committee member should be available to discuss burial planning and arrangements with the family as soon as possible following contact with CBS.
- b. The Chair of CBS Cemetery Committee or designated Committee member is authorized to provide the burial plot contract, and advise on funeral arrangements for those buyers meeting eligibility criteria.
- c. The Chair of CBS Cemetery Committee or designated Committee member will provide the funeral homes in the community with contact information and policies and procedures for a Jewish burial in the CBS cemetery.

B. Eligibility to Purchase CBS Cemetery Plot

1. CBS recognizes family and/or individual members in **good standing** and may purchase plots accordingly:
 - a. Family membership:
 1. Includes CBS member, spouse (or life-partner), and/or dependent children.
 2. Members seeking to bury non-Jewish spouse, life partner, or dependent shall purchase at least two graves, with one designated for the Jewish family member. [NOTE: See below for specifications for burial of non-Jewish family member.]
 - b. Individual membership in good standing includes only that individual.
 1. Additional plot(s) may be purchased for other family members, but not at member price.
2. Jews who are not members of CBS may purchase grave(s) at non-member prices;
3. Individuals currently owning CBS cemetery plots are “grandfathered” under the cemetery policies at the time of their purchase.
 - a. Family members of those buried in the CBS cemetery may be contacted requesting charitable donations to CBS cemetery fund for maintenance of their gravesite(s) (e.g., leveling, repairing, planting).
 - b. A living former member who has purchased a plot(s) but has discontinued membership because of *moving out of the area* may be assessed a maintenance fee. This fee will be considered as a charitable donation to the CBS Cemetery Fund to be applied to maintenance costs of the CBS cemetery.
 - c. A former member living within the Brazos Valley who has purchased a plot(s) but discontinued membership may be assessed a maintenance fee equivalent to the current annual family membership dues. This fee will be considered as a charitable donation to the CBS Cemetery Fund to be applied to maintenance costs of the CBS cemetery.

[NOTE: The price differential between member and non-member is to adjust for the ongoing contributions of CBS members’ dues, donations, and volunteer efforts to support the costs of maintaining the CBS cemetery.]

C. Price and Financial Agreement

1. Price of burial plot(s) will be determined by the Board of Directors. Prices should be reviewed every 5 years. The 2015 recommended price for:
 - a. CBS member in good standing = \$1250.
 - b. Individual's additional nuclear family member = \$2000
 - c. Member extended family relative = \$2500
 - d. Non-affiliated with CBS Jewish person = \$4000
2. Charges for the plot(s) will be payable to CBS Cemetery Fund at the time of purchase.
 - a. All charges and fees will be paid in full prior to burial, or
 - b. A Payment schedule arranging for paying in installments may be arranged by the Board of Directors, on a case by case basis, but for a period no longer than a year following burial.
3. Additional maintenance fees will be determined by the Board of Directors.
 - a. The CBS Cemetery Committee will propose estimated costs for the Board's approval for expenditures from the CBS Cemetery Fund to cover maintenance and repair in the cemetery.
 - b. Cemetery landscaping and fence maintenance will be paid from the Cemetery Fund.
 - c. Maintenance of gravestone(s) and/or marker(s) will be the financial responsibility of the deceased's family, made through donation(s) to CBS Cemetery Fund. The family may take care of the repair themselves or make arrangements with the cemetery to handle the repair. In either case, the family is financially responsible for the repair.
 1. Repairs and maintenance will be authorized through the Cemetery Committee to assure consistency throughout the CBS cemetery.
 2. If the family refuses to make a financial contribution to the Cemetery Fund to cover the costs of monument/marker repair, the marker may remain as is. If it is toppled, it may be laid horizontally over the gravesite.
4. "Grandfathering" existing plots- Policy for dealing with burial plots that are already owned
 - a. If no records or files can be found of family members claiming to own plots, their claim will be honored as space allows, with assessment of additional maintenance fee dedicated to the CBS Cemetery Fund.
 - b. Non-member families owning existing plots will be asked to keep CBS Cemetery Committee informed of any changes in contact information.
 1. A maintenance fee may be charged. This may be donated to CBS Cemetery Fund.

e. For those who no longer wish to hold burial plots in the CBS cemetery.

1. CBS will purchase the burial plot for the original amount paid.
2. Any maintenance fee(s) or donation(s) will be retained.

5. Transfer or reversion of plot(s)

- a. An individual or family of the original owner of a CBS gravesite may donate the plot to the Synagogue as a charitable donation to the Cemetery Fund equivalent to the current price of the plot.
- b. CBS may use Cemetery Fund or Operating Budget funds to buy back an unused plot from the owner or his/her family at their original purchase price. This will help to increase availability of plots for current members to purchase under current cemetery policies.
- c. Sales of CBS plot(s) directly between a previous owner selling to a new owner will not be recognized by CBS.

D. Deed & Signed Agreement

1. Legal template used as official deed to cemetery plot.
 - a. Three sets of signed documents: for CBS files, Cemetery Committee files, and individual or deceased's family.
 - b. Legal form similar to purchase of property deed or format used by other synagogues.
2. Plot(s) owned & maintained in perpetuity by CBS or until dissolution of Congregation Beth Shalom.
3. Conditions / restrictions specified in the deed.
 - a. Plot size to be identified (H x W x D)
 - b. Location specified in CBS's cemetery section within the fence.
 - c. Orientation to ensure uniformity within that row and between other rows.
 - d. Headstone & footstone specifications to be consistent with others within the fence.

E. Monument

1. Size parameters consistent throughout the area in length x width x depth. Leave a walkway between the next row(s) and neighboring gravesites.
2. No non-Jewish religious symbol(s) or phrase(s).

3. Headstone and footstone will be placed in same orientation and size with other gravesites within the fenced area.
4. Shape parameters consistent throughout the area (e.g., no mausoleums, statuary, or obelisks).
5. Composition and color parameters consistent throughout the area: e.g. granite, marble, natural & earth tones.
6. To be installed within a year of burial, or as soon after then as possible if problems encountered.

II. BURIAL

A. Gravesite Preparation Requirements

1. Gravesite within the fenced area will be dug manually if soil conditions permit.
 - a) No tractors, back-hoes or similar machinery will go inside the fenced-in area unless permission is given from CBS cemetery committee representative
 - b) Wooden or metal sheets will be placed on neighboring gravesites so that they are not damaged by the gravediggers.
 - c) It is the family's responsibility to notify the funeral home preparing the gravesite to comply with this.

[NOTE: Given the close configuration of plots, it is not possible to prepare a new gravesite without trampling on someone else's grave. In the past, some gravesites and markers have been damaged by this. Additionally, soil conditions may not allow hand dug graves, especially in summer droughts. If this situation occurs, very small back hoes will be used to dig the grave]

2. Protect other gravesites during the funeral ceremony
 - a) Wooden or metal sheets will temporarily be placed over other gravesites if need to tread on other site(s) or pile the dirt.
 - b) Tarp or carpet will be placed around the gravesite for the family and others attending the ceremony in order to protect other sites.
 - c) These coverings will be removed within 24 hours following the burial ceremony.
3. No metal "sleeve" should be used in grave (unless required by State Law).

B. Preparation of the body of the deceased

1. Follow guidelines in accordance to reform Jewish practices.
 - a) Cremation: While not encouraged in Reform Judaism, cremation is acceptable and a rabbi (or lay leader) may conduct the service. The cremains may be interred in a Jewish cemetery.
 - b) Donating organs to science: If it is the will of a person to donate his or her body or parts of the body to science, it is acceptable according to Reform and Conservative Judaism.
 - c) Use of a shroud: A simple linen shroud is the ideal in Judaism, but the deceased's own clothes may be used.
 - d) Wooden box casket: A primary consideration for a coffin is simplicity. A wooden coffin has been preferred by many, but is not essential. The simpler and less expensive coffin is recommended.
 - e) Interim time period between death and burial: The body should be buried as soon as practical. Delays are permitted for purposes of transport or family travel, to obtain a casket or shroud, if an autopsy is required, or if required by the secular authorities.
2. More conservative or orthodox Jewish practices are allowed.
3. No non-Jewish religious symbols can be buried with the body.

C. Jewish Funeral

1. Ideally, a Jewish spouse (or life-partner), parent, child, or significant family member should be in attendance for burial in CBS cemetery.
2. The funeral must be officiated by a rabbi, cantor, or a Jewish member of Congregation Beth Shalom.
3. Arrangements should be coordinated with the Chair or designated member of the Cemetery Committee, or the President or designated member of the CBS Board.
 - a. The synagogue may be used for the funeral or memorial service. A fee may be assessed for non-members.
 - b. Arrangements for procession to the cemetery are coordinated by funeral home.
 - c. Gravesite service arrangements are coordinated by funeral home:
 - Placement of casket
 - Tent
 - Tarp or carpet
 - Chairs for family

- Protection of other gravesites to accommodate attendees
- Equipment to lower casket
- Shovel for end of burial ceremony

E. Unveiling of the monument

1. Ideally, Jewish spouse, parent, child or significant family member will be in attendance.
2. Officiated by a rabbi, cantor, or a Jewish member of Congregation Beth Shalom.
3. Arrangements coordinated with Chair, Cemetery Committee or CBS President or designated other.
4. Time parameters
 - a. The unveiling customarily occurs after the Kaddish period (11 months) but less than a year.
 - b. Some perform the unveiling after 30 days.

<h2>III. ETIQUETTE AND PRACTICES</h2>
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A. Respect for Other Gravesites

1. Notify funeral home or gravediggers to cover other gravesites with wood or metal planking when digging and storing dirt for burial.
 - a. In preparing for burial and service, cover neighboring gravesite(s) w/ planks & tarp or carpet if service will expand beyond own immediate gravesite.
 - b. Do not leave other gravesites covered for more than 24 hours to prevent damage other gravesites.
2. Avoid treading on other gravesites.
3. Report problems noted within or surrounding the fenced area.

B. Leaving Stones

1. Pile of stones should be provided at the gate by CBS Cemetery Committee.
2. Keep stones off ground so it can be mowed.