

Catholic Cemeteries — Caretaker Notes



Diocese of Rockville Centre

Updated December 2016

Services Offered or Requested

Catholic Cemeteries have continued to modernize the Cemeteries since their inception. As changes in burial customs took place, so did the development of the Cemeteries. The fruits of careful planning and wise building are evident in the Catholic Cemeteries of the Rockville Centre Diocese. These facilities are integral to the life and mission of the Catholic Church and significantly contribute to the ministries of comfort, catechesis, and evangelization as delineated in the Mission Statement for Catholic Cemeteries.

Catholic Cemeteries recognize three entities involved in the area of funeral service: the parish, the cemetery, and the funeral home. Catholic Cemeteries are committed to offering only those products and services that are indigenous to the cemetery itself.

A complete staff of Operations & Maintenance personnel are employed by Catholic Cemeteries. The staff is responsible for the overall care and maintenance of the grounds, including the following tasks:

- Prepare graves, crypts and niches for burial services
- Maintain the grounds and buildings of the Catholic Cemeteries
- Perform installations of certain memorials and various plantings
- Provide additional services that care for the interment spaces in the cemeteries.
 - * This work is performed at reasonable and competitive prices. Owners of Burial Rights are invited to obtain an estimate on any work they may require.

There are general four categories for service:

1. Individual Work Orders (A Complaint or Request for Service)
2. Service by Area or Section
3. Service by Timing or Season
4. Service by Budget or Scope of Work Involved

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Individual Work Orders (Complaints or Service Requests)

For your convenience, all service requests may be submitted by completing a form on our website:

<http://www.holyroodcemetery.org/maintenance-requests.html>

If you do not have access to a computer, you can also visit or call the cemetery office to request service. When requesting service, it is **helpful to provide exact information**. The following information is essential for complete and accurate service:

- Cemetery Name
- Section, Range, and Lot (or Mausoleum, Corridor, Tier, and Crypt/Niche)
- Deceased Name(s)

Sometimes we have questions for you!

When placing a request, please be sure to leave your **name and contact information** (daytime telephone number, address) so we can assist you in the event there are additional questions regarding the service being requested.

What happens to my request?

The Individual Work Order is recorded and distributed to the appropriate department or personnel for action and/or response. Certain requests may receive an immediate response. However, some requests require personnel, equipment, or materials that may not currently be available and therefore necessitate us to schedule the work. Sometimes circumstances such as the weather or other burial services require us to postpone the request for service for completion at a later date or time. Other times, unforeseen circumstances dictate actions not expected or planned for by the customer or cemetery personnel. Here are just some examples of services requested and potential reasons that the service is delayed.

Service Requests - Examples

Example: *A simple request for seed is postponed. Why?*

Anticipated irrigation repair work to that immediate supply system. It's counter productive to seed the area when we are aware that the irrigation service will not work.

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Service Requests - Examples

Example: A second request for seed is postponed again. Why?

During certain times of the year (April-May, September-early October), we are doing this work practically everywhere in the cemetery. The most efficient way to manage our resources (personnel, seed, soil, tools) during these times is to service an entire area or section rather than move throughout the cemetery following requests in a chronological order. It is possible that we complete today's request before last month's request due to the circumstance of timing with season, material, and personnel in a given area as part of a larger plan in action.

Example: Repeated seed requests seem to be disregarded. You assume they are being ignored. Why?

The request was placed at the end of the seeding season or perhaps in the dormant stages of mid-Summer or Winter. You've waited a long time. You've called to confirm that order was placed, you now see seeding down the next row and across the roadway but not here where you are standing. All around you is soil and seed but not here where its needed right now. Sometimes that area was scheduled to be worked on. The material, the personnel, and equipment were right there yet it was skipped. Why? Because adjacent to this grave or at the head or foot of this gravesite was a burial service taking place, or scheduled that day or the next when all the other components for a completed task were in place. It's a great example of the famous expression called Murphy's Law. It can happen, it does happen at times, we are aware of it, we do note it, and we do follow through with it.

Example: Your request for seed went unanswered. You were told it was completed by the customer service personnel that looked up the request. You visited the site and it seems like nothing was done. Why?

The great thing about business is there is a human element involved in the process. It is amazing with all the information and technology available to us we can still make mistakes or assume things that are not complete or true. Even with the best of intentions. What happened? You asked us to seed John Smith's grave. We said we did. You say we did not. How did that happen? There could be a number of explanations. For example, there are four people named John Smith here at the cemetery. The site was visited and seed was needed. We did the job. That family just assumed we did it because it was needed. We're happy. They are happy. You're not so happy. A simple misunderstanding or a failure to communicate or receive the request completely and accurately is a reality. Something did go wrong but now we understand it. Let's correct it and move onward. Thank you for telling us and please accept our apology for not getting it right the first time around.

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Service by Area or Section

Tree trimming, tree removal, roadway resurfacing, foundation work, and re-grading of an area are good examples where individual requests for work are either pooled together or set aside for completion at a later date. Sometimes the work involves contractors and a process of bid solicitation, bid review, awarding the work, then scheduling and monitoring the work as it progresses. Often a definitive time frame for completion is not available until late in the process. Depending on the scope of the work, it may have impact on a budget and may require approval months in advance before the real work can begin. “When?” Sometimes a staff member states “They don’t know.” Although it is not the desired response, it can be an appropriate and truthful answer under these circumstances and conditions.

Service by Timing or Season

Inclement weather can delay a request for service. Frozen weather can have an impact on many arrangements including: setting a bouquet holder, raking, soil placement, foundation work, monument cleaning, and grass seeding. Sometimes wet soil conditions require waiting several days before simple work can be completed. Often a simple request is detained to avoid additional turf damage to the adjoining areas. The most difficult times are burials in late May and late October. Due to the process of ground settlement, thus tamping and area restoration with soil and seed, the work seems incomplete, or if completed viewed as a failed effort whereas it requires the next lawn care season (as much as 4 to 6 months away) to produce meaningful or effective results. As a result, these areas are generally prepared for good appearance then revisited and worked upon with the appropriate materials (topsoil/seed) during optimal weather conditions for germination.

Note: It’s a wrongful conclusion to assume nothing has been done or will be done. Scheduled work or not, the area will be inspected and improvement action taken at the appropriate season or time.

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Service by Budget or Scope of Work Involved

In a separate document, Catholic Cemeteries explains the difference between restoration and renovation work projects. These size projects involve large budgetary issues and depending on the scope of the project, it may take several weeks, months, and years to complete. One example is the replacement of a foundation beam in a range within the cemetery or in several ranges in a section. The scope of this work impacts on many lots, consumes a large amount of labor resources, and can be a big interruption to normal visitation in a given area. These projects can take lots of careful planning and preparation work. Depending on the scope of the project, there may be an extended period of time before tangible results are visible and before normal operation standards return to the area.

Paid Services Available

Catholic Cemeteries offers a full range of paid services including but not limited to:

- Opening/Closing of Graves, Crypts, Niches
- Memorial Foundations
- Installation of Bronze Markers
- Religious/Military Crypt and Niche Front Emblem Installations
- Urns and Floral Vase Holder Installations
- Monument (Family Mausoleum) Cleaning Services
- Seasonal Placement of Selective Decorations: Palm Crosses, Mother's Day Plants, Father's Day Plants, and Winter (Christmas) Blankets/Wreaths
- Trimming and Bush Removal Service
- Tree Plantings as Memorials

A separate document is available on our website (www.holyroodcemetery.org) with additional details and pricing on these services. The purchase of these services through Catholic Cemeteries supports the ministry and mission of Catholic Cemeteries and the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

Because of the variety and complexities involved in the selection of appropriate services, Catholic Cemeteries retains the services of carefully trained and competent personnel to explain the implications of the various alternatives.

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