



Roman Catholic Cemeteries of
the Archdiocese of Vancouver

Memorial Rules and Regulations



MISSION STATEMENT

We prepare the living for the life to come; we bury the dead in the Catholic tradition; and we comfort the living with compassion and care.

Our Ministry

We are an extension of parishes in the Archdiocese of Vancouver; a place for prayer, reflection, hope, and remembrance. As a part of a Church family and a community of believers, RCCAV exists to care for the family to help them live on.

Our Vision

To be the provider of choice for Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley Catholics and to offer hope and healing, to foster a culture of honouring the dead and to help the living experience life without the fear of death.



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PREAMBLE

Distilling both our Christian belief in the resurrection of the dead and the universal human desire that the bodily remains of our loved ones be treated with respect, Catholic tradition recognizes burial of the dead as a corporal work of mercy. Catholic cemeteries are an enduring material expression of the Church's care for her people, care which does not cease when death occurs.

The rules that follow uphold our shared belief in the dignity of the human person. They are intended to protect the common good and the interests of all stakeholders: foremost, the dead themselves, as well as bereaved families and friends, memorial dealers, cemetery staff, funeral service providers and memorial societies, and any other persons who may visit the cemetery grounds now or in years to come. Business practices are strictly regulated to prevent exploitation of families made vulnerable by grief.

These rules ensure that all memorials are dignified, long-lasting, readily maintained, and safe. It is recognized that many persons and families express a wish for a distinctive memorial; for the sake of the common good and in compassionate appreciation of the love and affection underlying such requests, these rules aim to accommodate such personalization as is in harmony with other memorials and the holy character of the site. It is hoped that the beauty and tranquility of the cemetery may bring consolation and encourage prayer for the repose of the souls of the departed.



SCOPE

This policy covers all manner of memorials to be placed in the cemetery. These memorials identify and commemorate the deceased persons whose remains, either full body or cremated, have been placed either below ground or in an above-ground structure. Memorials may consist of flat or upright markers for remains held below ground; memorial benches; and letterings or inscriptions, photo plaques, and emblems for above-ground structures for holding human remains. Such a structure may be a crypt for whole remains, a niche for urns containing cremated remains; a columbarium, which includes niches; or a mausoleum, which includes crypts and often also includes niches. In some cases, remains may be held in an underground vault or a private family mausoleum, either of which is subject to additional specifications that are documented under separate cover. Markers, crypt fronts, and niche fronts are regulated with regard to placement, size, design, and any inscriptions or decorations, as detailed below.

PROCESS

1 AUTHORITY OVER MEMORIALS

- 1.1 These *Memorial Rules and Regulations (MRR)* govern all aspects of memorials in the cemetery, including planning, design, installation, inscription, and other ornamentation. Certificate holders, families, visitors, memorial dealers, and contractors must abide by these rules, which are to be read in conjunction with the cemetery's *General Rules and Regulations* under a separate document.
- 1.2 To prevent confusion or misunderstanding, the *MRR* shall be posted on the RCCAV website. These documents shall also be made available in hard copy to enquirers at the Gardens of Gethsemani cemetery office during regular office hours.
- 1.3 The cemetery reserves the right to remove any memorial that is in a dangerous condition or that is detrimental to the general appearance of the cemetery. Upon inspection, the cemetery reserves the right to remove any memorial in violation of the *MRR*.

2 CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 For the sake of accuracy of dimensions, long-term care for the memorial, and convenience, the cemetery prefers that families purchase goods and services from it directly. Alternatively, however, some goods and services may be contracted with an off-premise memorial dealer, in which case the following conditions apply:
 - The family is reminded that written approval by the cemetery is required before a memorial is installed or any procedures are performed (see Section 3).
 - The memorial dealer is required to carry suitable insurance and obtain authorization to work on cemetery grounds.
 - The family should confirm in advance that the desired goods and services are eligible for off-premise arrangements.



- An administrative fee is payable to the cemetery to cover the cost of a base or foundation and of work that must be done by cemetery staff.
- The cemetery will not be responsible for the cost of a memorial purchase or inscription work for which the cemetery management's written approval has not been obtained.
- In the case of multi-person memorials, the family is responsible for the cost of the name/date plaque or engraving at the time of each interment. Normally, if the name of the first-interred person has been engraved, any subsequent name and date should similarly be engraved rather than inscribed on a plaque.
- The family shall be wholly responsible for any costs associated with remedying any defects in materials or workmanship so contracted.

2.2 Business relationships are regulated to avoid conflict of interest.

- The memorial dealer may not solicit memorial sales or memorial work on the cemetery grounds or through cemetery personnel.
- The memorial dealer may not use the cemetery name in printed or electronic material, direct marketing, or other promotions.
- No member of the cemetery staff shall hold any direct or indirect interest in any business connected with the erection of memorials, mausoleums, vaults, etc., nor shall they recommend the engagement of any particular firm.

3 DOCUMENTATION

- 3.1 No memorial shall be placed in the cemetery until it has been accepted by the cemetery management. Such oversight includes number of pieces, positioning, size, materials, design, construction method, artisanship, inscriptions, symbolism, portraiture, colouring or other ornamentation, installation, and any other aspect that the cemetery management in its exclusive judgment deems relevant.



3.2 Therefore, before construction of any memorial begins, an application should be submitted to the cemetery management. Any incomplete or inadequate application will be required to be corrected and resubmitted. All applications must be accompanied by the following:

- a clear sketch, design in detail, font name and size described in words, and all dimensions in scale, including any inscription or ornamentation exactly as they are to appear on the finished work (see Sections 12 and 13)
- documentation that a person being memorialized has a right of interment (see *General Rules and Regulations*)
- payment of contracted items, including the foundation fee, or inscription/lettering fees, by an approved method of payment.¹

3.3 Additional documentation may be required under any of various special circumstances:

- an accurate English translation of any proposed inscription that is in a language other than English or French²
- if applying for inscription of a name not listed in the cemetery's burial records, an affidavit executed by the Certificate holder or, if deceased, their heirs at law
- any affidavit that may be required of the memorial dealer in certain circumstances under the *General Rules and Regulations*.

3.4 Once an application has been submitted, the proposed design may be changed only by submitting an amended application in writing, accompanied by payment of the cost of labour and materials related to the change. Oral notification of a change order is deemed insufficient.

¹ As of this writing, these methods include certified cheque, bank cheque, MasterCard, and Visa credit card. The list of methods of payment may be amended by attaching a schedule to these *Rules*.

² The English translation is required solely to allow the cemetery management to check its suitability, and it need not appear on the memorial itself.



4 INSTALLATIONS (SETTING)

- 4.1 In all cases, written approval by the cemetery is required before any memorials may be installed or procedures performed in the cemetery.
- 4.2 Contractors are to have permits before any work is done in the cemetery. All work must be completed on the day for which permission is granted.
- 4.3 Memorials may be set only at those times and under those conditions that the cemetery management deems appropriate, normally between March and October inclusive.³ In particular, no memorials are to be set unless the temperature is at least 5°C.

5 INSPECTION

- 5.1 Upon delivery of the memorial and prior to its installation, cemetery staff shall inspect it for compliance with the *MRR*. No memorial shall be set in the cemetery until it has been inspected and accepted..
- 5.2 Cemetery staff will also inspect each memorial after it has been set and may direct the dealer or setter to resolve any discrepancy that is then observed.

6 EMBELLISHMENT AND REFURBISHMENT

- 6.1 No one other than cemetery staff may attach any item to a memorial. In particular, attachment of any frames or portraiture (see Section 13) to a marker or crypt front is reserved to staff.
- 6.2 Inscription of crypts and niches is subject to Section 17.
- 6.3 Refurbishment of a memorial is subject to Section 11.2.

³ From November through February, installation is typically not feasible due to moist ground conditions, which can lead to unlevel settling.



6.4 Weathering of memorials over time is natural and expected; in the event, however, that the cemetery deems refurbishment of a memorial advisable, it will give the family reasonable notice. The cost of refurbishment shall be borne by the family except under the following circumstances:

- If the cemetery management requires a memorial to be refurbished due to a manufacturer defect, the memorial supplier will complete the work without cost to the cemetery or lot holder.
- The cemetery will be responsible for damage to a memorial only if this has been caused by cemetery personnel and equipment, in which case the cemetery reserves the right to determine liability and to perform the repair.

6.5 Before a memorial is removed temporarily for the purpose of refurbishment, an approved memorial application indicating the existing inscriptions is required. The conditions of Section 7.1 also apply.

7 REMOVAL

7.1 Once a memorial has been erected, no one may remove it from the lot without having first obtained written approval from the cemetery management, which will require one of the following original documents:

- the purchase agreement (i.e., “irrevocable purchase agreement for at-need/pre-need”)
- the Certificate of Easement
- an affidavit duly executed by the original Certificate holder or, if deceased, by their heirs at law.

7.2 Any memorial that has been set in violation of the *MRR* or is damaged or has been deemed unsafe will be removed by the cemetery staff at the expense of the memorial dealer or setter. The memorial dealer and family will be notified.



8 FEES

- 8.1 The cemetery management reserves the right to fix charges for memorial foundations, memorial placement or removal, and inscription permits. Fees are subject to change without prior notification.
- 8.2 Fees related to memorials are due when the application is submitted. Although payment for the lot or niche itself may be arranged under a pre-need payment plan, the cemetery management will not approve or permit memorial and inscription work or stonework until all other charges related to the memorial have been paid in full.
- 8.3 As noted in Section 14.3, arrangements with a third party will entail an off-premise service fee.
- 8.4 If the family signs off on a memorial design more than 90 days after payment, the cemetery reserves the right to reassess the fee.

9 ENFORCEMENT, VARIATIONS, AND AMENDMENTS

- 9.1 RCCAV reserves the right at any time or times, with or without notice to Certificate holders, to amend or repeal any element of the *MRR*.
- 9.2 Although Catholic cemeteries by their nature aim for continuity with Christian tradition, memorial traditions do evolve over time through demographic shifts, changing fashions, and technological developments. Some regulations that were once strictly enforced have fallen into disuse and been rescinded. Through oversight or error or historical change or some other reason, certain memorials found in the cemetery, if they were being newly erected today, might deviate from the current *MRR*. Their presence is in no way to be considered a precedent.
- 9.3 Special cases may arise in which the literal enforcement of a rule may impose unnecessary hardship. RCCAV therefore reserves the right to suspend, modify, or allow exceptions to any of the *MRR* without notice when in the judgment of the management such action appears necessary; such case-by-case suspension, modification, or exception shall in no way be construed as affecting the general applications of such *MRR*.

PHYSICAL SPECIFICATIONS

10 MEMORIALS IN PARTICULAR SECTIONS

10.1 From time to time, the cemetery may open new sections or amend the products and services available at specific locations. More detailed specifications, described in a separate document, may apply to memorials within a particular section.

11 MATERIALS

11.1 All materials used must be of high quality. Any granite is to be certified quarry stock approved for use in memorialization and free of cracks, seams, or knots. Memorials may not be built from any other material, such as marble, slate, concrete, or cast iron; memorials may not be hollow nor use polystyrene foam filler. Any bronze alloy must meet these standards of composition: copper $\geq 87\%$, tin $\geq 5\%$, lead $\geq 2.5\%$, zinc $\geq 5\%$, all other elements $\leq 1\%$.

11.2 Replacements or additions to memorials must match retained components in size, colour, and material.

12 ORNAMENTATION AND SYMBOLISM

12.1 Memorial use of any symbol, religious or otherwise, is subject to approval by the cemetery management, which is to be the sole judge of a symbol's propriety in the interest of the common good and reverence of the cemetery.

12.2 Drawings submitted must exactly show the nature and size of all proposed symbols (see Section 3.2). The size of all symbols is regulated in relation to the size of the memorial on which it would appear.

12.3 A crucifix or cross must normally appear prominently on every memorial; however, another religious symbol such as the Blessed Virgin Mary, praying hands, an angel, rosary beads, or a dove may be substituted. Secular symbols must not be more prominent than religious symbols in size or layout.



12.4 Other acceptable classes of symbols include the following:

- a crest or emblem of a religious organization (e.g., Knights of Columbus or Couples for Christ) or a religious order
- representations of a profession, military service, or hobby
- portraiture (see Section 13).

13 PORTRAITURE

13.1 The subject of portraiture must be the deceased person or persons interred in the burial space, and an appropriate lot fee must have been paid for any person depicted in such portraiture. Normally no more than two persons may appear in the portrait.

13.2 Portraiture may be rendered in the medium of stainless steel, ceramic cameo, bronze photo relief, or photograph. Any proposed portraiture is subject to approval by the cemetery management with regard to size, shape, finish, appearance, location or placement, and material composition.

13.3 The attire of the person or persons in the portrait, while not necessarily formal, shall be in keeping with the dignity and sobriety of the cemetery, as judged by the cemetery management.

13.4 A portrait may be commissioned through the cemetery office. It requires a separate application and an additional fee beyond the standard memorial fees.

14 LAWN MEMORIALS

14.1 For each Certificate, there may be no more than one memorial.

- a single lot may have only one memorial
- two lots side by side may have either a shared memorial or a single memorial on each lot.

14.2 No more than four persons' names may appear on any single marker.



- 14.3 A lawn memorial may be flat or upright (see Section 15 or 16, respectively). Every bronze marker and upright memorial shall be set on a foundation, that is, an in-ground base. This is a gray granite slab sold and supplied by the cemetery and installed by cemetery staff. If a third party is contracted to provide the upright memorial, an off-premise service fee which incorporates the cost of the foundation is applicable.
- 14.4 The following design features are not permitted: enclosures of any kind whatsoever, footstones, corner markers, and corner posts. Absence of a design feature from this list does not imply that it would be accepted.
- 14.5 Size will vary with the size and location and type of the lot.⁴ Memorial size regulations are available to Certificate holders at the time of purchase. The cemetery reserves the right to refuse to set a memorial that does not meet the size criteria.
- 14.6 Each dimension of a memorial being inspected is permitted to be within a specified tolerance over or under the standard dimension as described in the application. For a granite flat, the width and depth tolerances are $\frac{1}{4}$ ". For an upright memorial, the thickness and width tolerances are $\frac{1}{4}$ ", and the height tolerance is $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

15 FLAT MARKERS

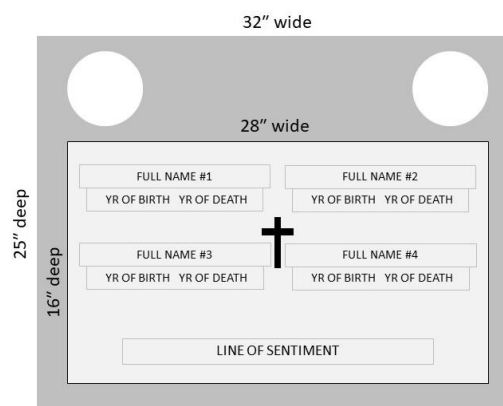
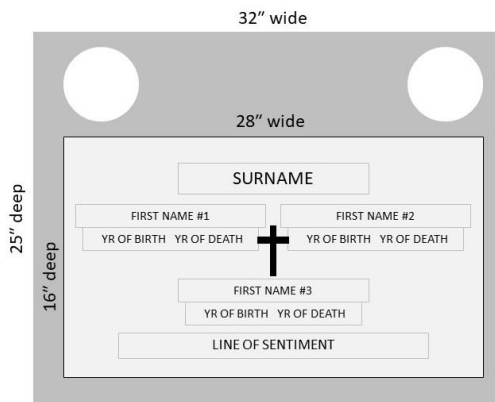
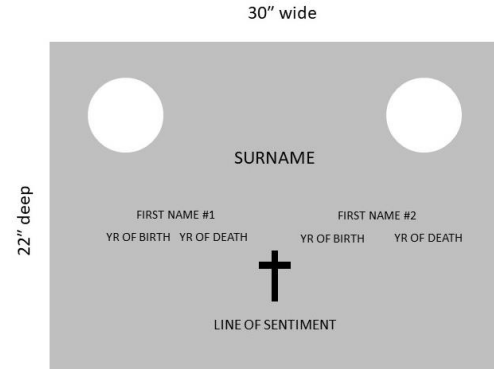
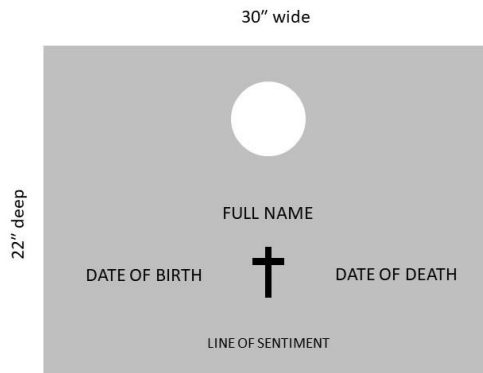
- 15.1 A flat marker consists either of a granite slab alone, which is engraved directly, or a granite base to which a cast bronze plaque is affixed by threaded bolts.
- 15.2 A flat marker of either type may be used for full-body burial or interment of cremated remains. It may be installed in any burial area other than the designated upright marker sections, currently St Anthony's Garden or Our Lady of Lavang.

⁴ By tradition, dimensions of plots and memorials in Canada have been specified in units of the imperial system, which remains the standard among memorial dealers. Measurements in inches may be converted to centimetres by multiplying by 2.54.



- 15.3 A flat marker is normally set flush with the ground; the older raised “pillow” style will be permitted at St Peter’s only upon special request and is not permitted at all at Gardens of Gethsemani.
- 15.4 A flat marker must have either one or two core holes to accommodate vases (see figures below). A flat marker without a vase core hole will normally not be set by the cemetery.
- 15.5 A flat marker must be a minimum of 2.5” in thickness.
- 15.6 A granite flat marker must have a polished top and polished edges on all other sides.
- 15.7 The finish on the bronze marker may be of any colour. Emblems must have a low profile.
- 15.8 A granite or bronze marker may be purchased directly from the cemetery; alternatively, if a third party is contracted to provide the bronze marker (see Section 2.1), an off-premise marker service fee incorporating the cost of the granite base is applicable. For either granite or bronze, a third-party supplier must verify the size and material (see Section 11.1) prior to ordering and provide the layout to the cemetery to acquire the proper approval (see Section 3.2).⁵

⁵ Families can be confident that a bronze plaque ordered directly from the cemetery will have the bolts properly positioned to attach it to the granite base. Regrettably, third-party bronzes have sometimes been incompatible.



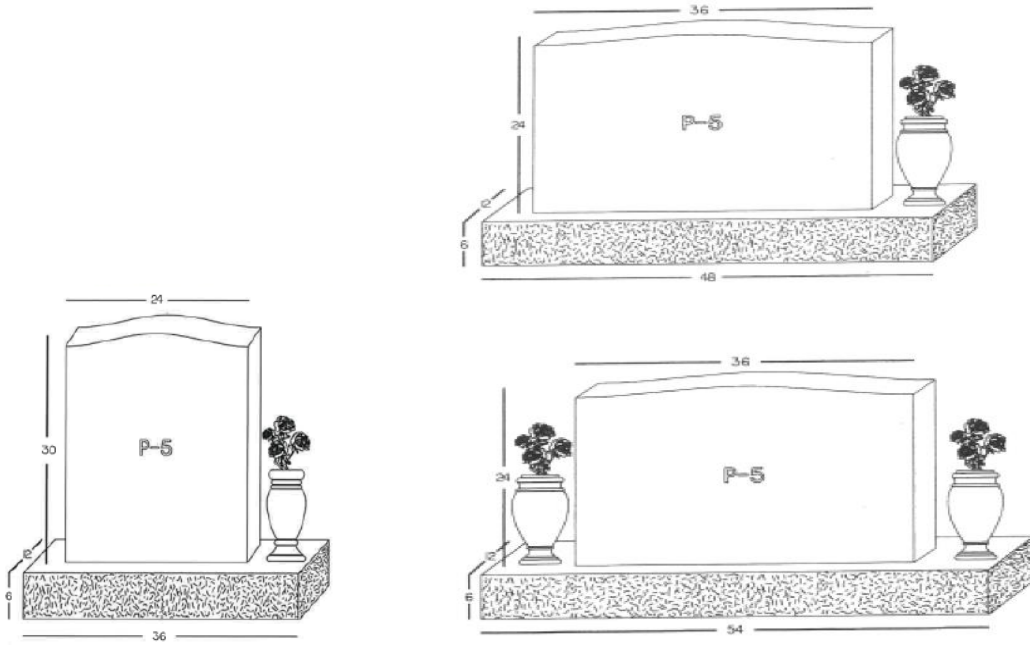
Examples of flat full-body markers with one or two core holes: (a) granite, single; (b) granite, companion; (c) bronze, three persons with shared surname; (d) bronze, multiple names. Not exactly to scale. Emblems and other possible customizations are not shown.



16 UPRIGHT MEMORIALS

- 16.1 Upright memorials are made of granite and consist of a vertical tablet securely affixed to a flat base. The assembly must be placed on a foundation, for which an off-premise fee is applicable if a third party provides the vertical tablet (see Section 14.3). The vertical tablet of an upright memorial must be ordered at the same time as the foundation. The sides of the base shall be rock-pitched.
- 16.2 One or two vases may be included in the design of an upright memorial (see figures below). The maximum height is 15”.
- 16.3 For several reasons, the cemetery is regrettably unable to accommodate requests that are commonly made for a memorial to be higher than the standard.⁶

⁶ Lower markers are less likely to fall over and easier for staff to move temporarily, as is sometimes necessary while an adjacent grave is being served. Finally, a degree of uniformity is desirable in light of our fundamental equality before God. The *kathisma* of an Eastern Catholic funeral liturgy eloquently expresses this equality: “When we have gained the world, we take up our abode in the grave, where kings and beggars lie down together.”



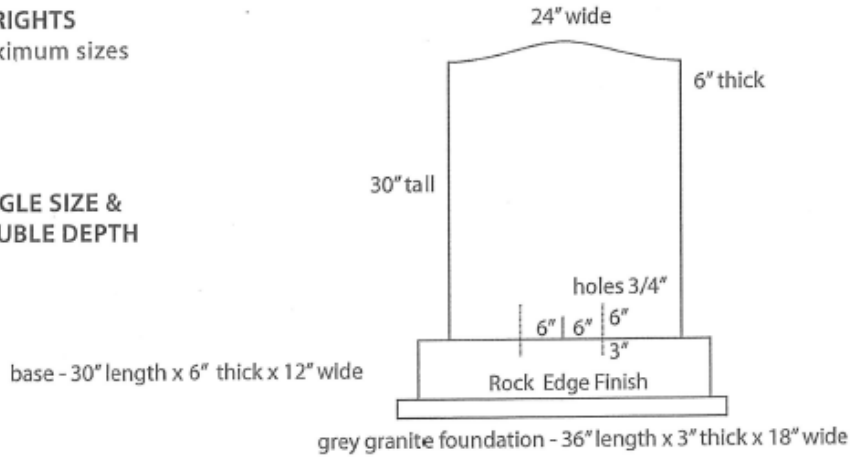
Single upright memorial with vase.

Double upright memorial with one or two vases.

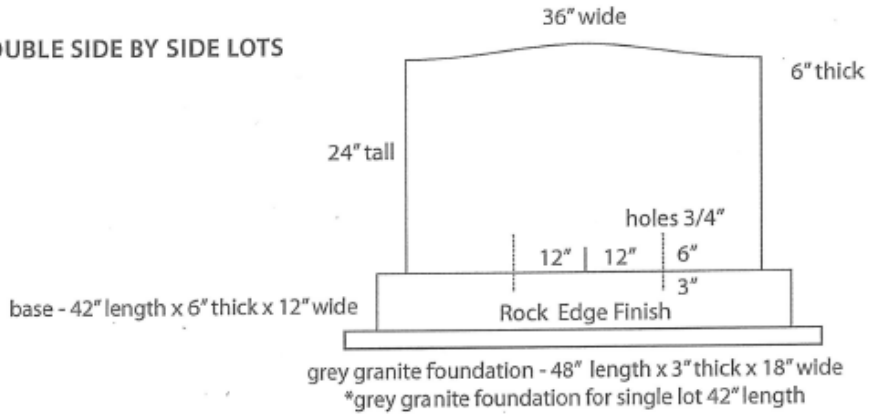


UPRIGHTS
Maximum sizes

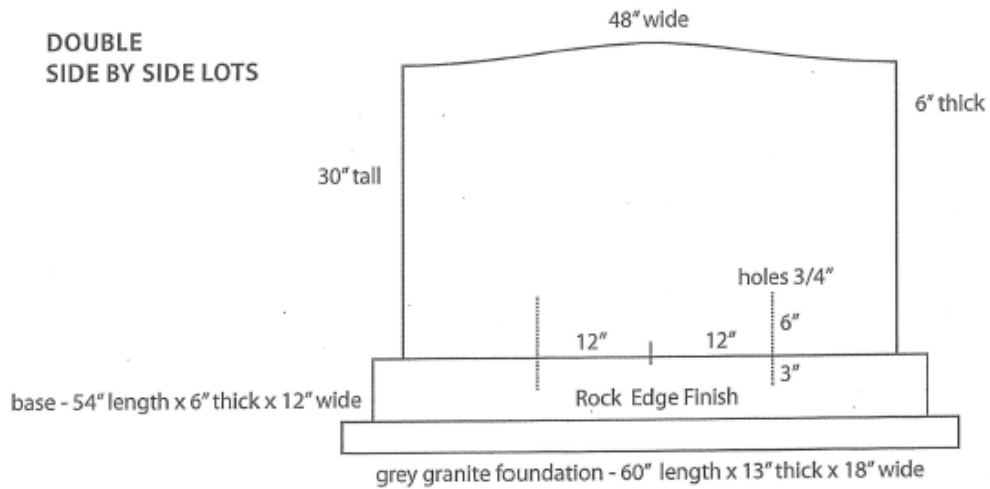
**SINGLE SIZE &
DOUBLE DEPTH**



DOUBLE SIDE BY SIDE LOTS



**DOUBLE
SIDE BY SIDE LOTS**



** Different shapes permitted as long as within the above maximum sizes. **

Single and double upright memorials without vase.



17 INSCRIPTIONS ON CRYPTS AND NICHEs

- 17.1 The front of a crypt or niche may be decorated or inscribed only by cemetery staff or, following approval of the layout, by a stone engraver contracted by the cemetery. The cemetery management, under agreement with a memorial inscription firm, will complete all inscriptions at the cemetery's mausoleums and columbaria.
- 17.2 Each lot holding is designed so that a prescribed amount of space for an inscription is available for each entombment within it. The designated inscription area must allow for space between sides of stones and other inscriptions. Any questions as to available space will require the submission of a full sketch; the decision of the cemetery management is final.
- 17.3 Lawn crypts and niches may use granite engraving or bronze lettering. Bronze features and emblems may be chosen from a selection offered exclusively by the cemetery management. The cemetery can provide a list of approved epitaphs upon request. In general, epitaphs must be from Scripture, prayers, or religious hymns and must express Christian sentiments.
- 17.4 All newly added lettering must conform to existing lettering in size and style, except where a rule change necessitates a variation.
- 17.5 Space permitting, any of the following inscriptions may be chosen, provided they conform to the general rules:
- dates of birth and death, in the form of year alone or "Feb[.] 1, 2023" or "February 1, 2023"
 - first name and middle initial or full middle name
 - surname with optional maiden name or dual surname
 - suffixes such as Sr., Jr., M.D.
 - honorary title such as K.C., H.S., or K.H.S.
 - approved epitaph or term of endearment.



- 17.6 On all size lots, additional inscriptions of surnames in large letters will be permitted. Surnames may be placed next to each other (for short family names) or one below the other.
- 17.7 Certain proposed layouts (for example, use of a different surname, placement of name or dates) would result in being unable to accommodate inscriptions for the full number of entombments still expected. In this event, either the layout application must be accompanied by an affidavit confirming the Certificate holder's acceptance of a reduced number of future inscriptions, or a replacement marker must be purchased.
- 18 GLASS-FRONTED NICHEs
- 18.1 Memorabilia, texts, and other symbols displayed within a glass-fronted niche must be consistent with the dignity and Catholic character of the mausoleum, in the sole judgment of the cemetery management.



OFFICIAL ADOPTION AND PROMULGATION

Roman Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Vancouver (RCCAV) hereby adopts these *Memorial Rules and Regulations (MRR)*. Its employees; owners of rights to interment, entombment, and inurnment; contractors and their employees performing work within the cemeteries; and visitors to the cemeteries shall be subject to the *MRR* along with any terms and conditions detailed in the Certificate of Easement, Purchase Agreement, and any supplementary schedules and regulations that RCCAV may issue from time to time.

Peter Nobes
Director of RCCAV
Archdiocese of Vancouver, BC

RCCAV operates its main operations and administration from the Gardens of Gethsemani in south Surrey. Business hours are Monday to Saturday, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. We welcome your queries.

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