



*Maryland Department of Veterans &
Military Families*

Cemetery & Memorial Programs

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ACTING SECRETARY

13 June 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

From: Maryland Department of Veterans & Military Families
Cemetery and Memorial Program

Subject: Items Donated to Veterans Cemeteries

1. This policy is to consolidate the policies regarding permanent in-ground flower vases (1997), privately purchased memorial benches (2009), and any other items that were donated to the cemetery to be utilized on cemetery property. The Maryland Department of Veterans & Military Families (DVMF) will maintain the standards set forth by the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) for the operation and management of Veteran Cemeteries. In doing so we wish to accommodate the families and friends of those buried in DVMF cemeteries an honorable and dignified experience to reflect. Currently all donations of permanent in-ground flower vases and memorial benches are not accepted. All other donations will be considered on a case-by-case basis after thorough review by department leadership.
2. All donated items to a DVMF cemetery become the property of the state of Maryland and DVMF has the responsibility for its disposition. All items donated to a cemetery will go through the following procedures to determine its disposition.
 - a) If it is determined by the Cemetery Superintendent that a donated item was damaged due to actions caused by cemetery personnel, it is the cemetery's responsibility to repair or replace the damaged item at the expense of the Department. The cemetery is not responsible for damages due to manufacture, age, or exposure to the elements. This is determined by the Cemetery Superintendent.
 - b) If it is determined by the Cemetery Superintendent that a donated item was damaged due to actions caused by a contractor or their staff, it is the contractor's responsibility to repair or replace the damaged item at the expense of their company. The contractor is not responsible for damage due to manufacture, age, or exposure to the elements. This is determined by the Cemetery Superintendent.

- c) If the donated item is deemed by the Cemetery Superintendent to be no longer functional or a safety hazard, the item will be discarded 30 days after the date of determination. All efforts will be made to contact the donor to ask if they wish to retrieve the item before it is disposed of.
- 3. This policy is enforced by all staff of the DVMF. This policy may change at any time.
- 4. Any questions concerning this policy can be directed to the Cemetery and Memorial Programs Director. Contact via email (russell.ware@maryland.gov) or phone (410-923-6981 Option 7).



Russell C. Ware

Director

Memorial & Cemetery Programs

Maryland Department of Veterans & Military Families

Distribution:

A – DVMF Secretary

B – DVMF Cemeteries