

Welcome to the Spanish Fork City Cemetery January 1, 2014

The Spanish Fork City Cemetery is considered a public park. All rules, laws, and regulations in the Spanish Fork City Municipal Code that apply to public parks also apply to the Cemetery.

Hours of Operation

The cemetery grounds are open every day of the year including holidays. Cemetery grounds hours are from Dawn to Dusk. The entrance gates are closed and locked each day at dark. Office Hours are from 7:30 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday, closed holidays. Hours of Operation and cemetery sexton contact information is posted on the Records Building at 420 South 400 East, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660.

Visitors

Visitors are welcome and encouraged to walk the grounds. Animals, at large or restrained to a leash are not permitted in the cemetery as posted and in accordance to Spanish Fork Municipal Code 6.08.160. The water in the hydrants located throughout the cemetery is non potable and is intended for irrigation only. Do not drink the water from these hydrants.

General Information

The first burial at the Spanish Fork City Cemetery was in 1853. The cemetery was officially established in 1868 with the design and formation of blocks one through four. The cemetery has over 25,000 burial positions spanning 30 acres. Spanish Fork City has planned ahead to expand the cemetery into Centennial Park when necessary. Based on the current burial space inventory and the rate of sales it is probable this expansion will begin as early as 2020.

The Cemetery Division is responsible for serving city residents and other patrons concerning their interment needs for loved ones. The cemetery has conducted 3,043 burials in the past 20 years, averaging 152 per year. The leading year was 2008 with 186 burials. Up to 30% of all burials are done on Saturdays. No burials are allowed on Sundays and Holidays.

In addition to these duties, the Cemetery Division also maintains burial records and is charged with the duties relevant to the sale of burial spaces to the general public. Patrons have the option of purchasing a single burial space that will contain two burials, the second burial over the top of the first. In this case the gravesite is closed following the first burial and then opened again, at a later date, when needed for the second burial. This is termed a "double deep" burial. The annual sale of burial positions over the past 6 years averaged 174 positions.

Cemetery Division personnel are known for their extreme care and sensitivity to patrons and visitors alike. The Cemetery Division is also responsible for the perpetual maintenance of the City Cemetery grounds which include irrigation, mowing, edging, tree care, turf care, maintenance of service roads, and general upkeep of the grounds.

Purchase of Burial Positions

The sexton has a list of burial positions that are available for sale. Individuals come to the cemetery and meet with the sexton to decide the location of the positions they would like to purchase. The sexton will write down the Block, Lot and Position numbers for the individuals and then the individuals go to the city offices and pay for the positions. Full purchase price is required at the time of the sale. Partial payments are not accepted.

A Certificate of Burial Right, sometimes called a Deed, is then created by a city secretary that identifies the positions that have been purchased. A copy of the Certificate of Burial Right is mailed to the purchaser and an additional copy is kept in the city offices.

Upon completion of the purchase procedures the sexton makes a plot sheet listing the positions purchased and the owner of the positions. The plot sheet is filed in the cemetery records office and used for recording the future grave assignments of the positions purchased by the plot sheet owner.

Find the current fee schedule at <http://www.spanishfork.org/dept/parkrec/cemetery/rates.php>

Cemetery Layout and Burials

The cemetery is arranged in blocks, lots and positions. The cemetery contains 30 blocks that vary in size and shape, containing as many as 66 lots with the smallest block containing just 10 lots. Typically, all lots in the cemetery are arranged to include 24 burial positions. Each burial position is 9 feet long and 4 feet wide, creating a burial lot that is 32 feet long and 27 feet wide. Depending on the location in the cemetery, some exceptions are lots that contain from 1 to 23 burial positions.

There is a corresponding plot sheet for each lot that lists the plot ownership and who is buried on that property. Each individual position has a designated *block.lot.position* number and is identifiable on a corresponding map of the cemetery. The same information is recorded in the city's computer system. Before digging begins for a burial, the plot sheet is used to identify and double-check the proper burial location.

In most cases, the mortuary instigates the burial process. The mortuary contacts the cemetery sexton to give him the name of the person to be buried and to inform him when the burial is scheduled. If it is necessary for the deceased's family to first purchase property and pay cemetery fees, the mortuary directs the family to contact the cemetery sexton to conduct that business. This coordination generally takes place at least two days prior to the burial.

The Spanish Fork City Cemetery website contains burial position search and location capabilities at <http://www.spanishfork.org/dept/parkrec/cemetery>

The Spanish Fork City Municipal Code concerning cemeteries is located on the city website at <http://www.spanishfork.org/dept/admin/pdf/citycode/TITLE7.pdf>

Opening and Closing of a Grave

Digging of the grave begins once the location of the grave has been established. A typical grave is 40 inches wide and 8 feet long. A template is used that measures the size of the grave. The template is cut around and the grass is lifted by using hand shovels or a motorized sod cutter. The grass is preserved and set off to the side to be replaced after the grave is completed. All full sized graves are dug with the use of a backhoe.

There is no specific depth that the grave has to be dug. Graves should be deep enough to insure that there is sufficient room for the soil and grass to be placed over the vault after it has been placed in the grave to maintain protection of the vault and allow the grass to grow properly. Double deep burials require the first vault to be buried deep enough so that the burial of the second vault will still leave sufficient room for the soil and grass to be placed over the vault and allow the grass to grow properly. The soil removed from the hole is stored on the property at a remote location leaving the area around the gravesite level. Plywood is placed over the opening until the vault company arrives.

On the day of the burial the selected vault company arrives many hours in advance to set the vault and equipment in the opening and make the gravesite presentable for the service. The vault company places aluminum planking covered with artificial grass mats around the opening to prevent soil and people from slipping into the hole making the area as attractive and as safe as possible. They typically erect a shade tent with seating for the family of the deceased. The vault company personnel usually stand by until the graveside service is over, and then they complete the casket lowering and vault sealing processes.

After the vault lid is in place the cemetery staff shovel soil into the hole with the use of hand shovels making sure that the soil around the sides of the vault are tamped to prevent the ground from sinking. A motorized compactor is used to compact the soil. Once the grass has been placed on the grave the grass and soil are compacted to level the burial spot to the original elevation. The grave is then complete.

Graveside Services

Cemetery employees will assist the family and morticians in any way possible during a graveside service. The operation of lawnmowers and other equipment will be discontinued if the noise they generate distracts from the graveside service. Cemetery employees will not approach the gravesite until the family has left the area. The cemetery sexton will provide protocol training to the other cemetery employees regarding these matters.

Vault Requirements

According to the Spanish Fork City code, a standard concrete burial vault must be used for all burials, with the exception of cremation burials. Cremation burials must be in a solid container, such as plastic or wood, but concrete is not required. Cemetery personnel are trained to assist the vault company in placing the vault into the grave prior to the graveside service and to assist in the graveside setup.

Grave Marker Placement

No grave marker or headstone may be placed without approval of the sexton, and must be installed by a professional monument company. All headstones must have a six-inch minimum concrete mowing strip along the border that is flush with the ground. If holes or flower vases are placed within the mowing strip, they must be placed on the north and/or south sides of the headstone only. No holes are to be placed in the mowing strips on the east or west side of the headstone or grave marker.

No headstone can extend beyond the property owned by those placing the marker. This means a single-grave headstone, including the concrete mowing strip, cannot exceed 48 inches in length. A double-grave headstone cannot exceed 96 inches in length, and headstones should not exceed 24 inches in width including the concrete mow strip.

When a person is buried, the body is traditionally placed so that the head rests on the west side of the grave. Therefore, all headstones are placed on the west side of the grave, above the head of the deceased. A married couple is traditionally laid to rest with the man on the woman's right. Care must be taken when planning for the headstone engraving. The names of the deceased may be engraved on either the west or the east side of the stone. No marker is to be placed on the east end of the grave. When a grave marker is being placed in the center of the grave, such as a military marker or an infant marker, it must be flush with the ground.

Flowers on Graves

The following procedures are followed for maintaining and disposing of flowers on graves:

Fresh cut flowers will remain on graves until they appear to be out of condition as determined by cemetery personnel. Once the flowers are no longer attractive, the cemetery crew will dispose of the flowers and the container provided for them.

Containers of flowers will remain on the grave for a period of at least one week following the graveside service. If flowers still look nice, they may remain longer. If family members request flowers to be disposed of at any time, cemetery personnel will accommodate them.

Plastic flowers are allowed to be placed in the cemetery, provided they are placed in the headstone flower holes so as to allow maintenance of cemetery grounds. Plastic flowers may be removed at anytime if they are determined to be unsightly or create maintenance problems.

Permanent Decorations

In order to provide a high standard of care with a limited staff it is necessary to implement guidelines governing all permanent decorations. All shepherd hooks, works of art and solar lights must be approved by the Sexton before installation. If installed, such decoration must be placed in the concrete or stone base of the headstone, marker or monument. These items must be secured to the grave marker base by means of holes drilled in the concrete or by other secure attachment. These items cannot project beyond the headstone base in any horizontal direction nor can the items exceed seven feet in height from the ground elevation. Nothing may be placed on the grass outside of the headstone concrete or stone mowing strip.

Outlining of the gravesite using bricks, rocks, concrete, flowers or any other decoration or device is prohibited. This prevents the cemetery staff from mowing and trimming the site.

All decorations are subject to removal and disposal by cemetery staff when they are determined to be unsightly or create maintenance problems. These guidelines are intended to provide a cemetery facility with the most pleasing and uniform appearance that is acceptable to the majority of cemetery patrons.

Tree and Shrub Care

In order to provide a high standard of care with a limited staff it is necessary to implement guidelines governing the planting of trees, shrubs and flowers at the headstone locations. Trees and shrubs are not to be planted, pruned or removed by the public without the consent of the cemetery sexton.

All tree care is performed or overseen by cemetery staff. Diseased or damaged trees are removed by cemetery staff, and the staff plants all new trees. Pruning of trees is to be done under the direction of cemetery personnel. Requests for tree removal when the tree is intrusive to a grave or a grave marker will be honored. However, every attempt is made to save the tree if possible.

Mowing and Trimming

The cemetery has two gasoline-powered riding lawnmowers that are used to mow the cemetery's grass. Excess grass around the grave markers is removed through the use of hand-held string trimmers. Generally the cemetery is mowed and trimmed weekly from April through October.

Irrigation

All watering is done by an automatic sprinkling system that is connected to a timing controller. The cemetery sexton is in charge of the watering schedule. Other spot sprinkling with hoses is done within the cemetery as needed.

Snow Removal

All snow removal from the streets within the cemetery is the responsibility of the Parks Department and cemetery personnel. When snow must be removed around a gravesite for a burial, the cemetery staff creates enough open space to accommodate those who may be attending a service.

Road Maintenance

Cemetery personnel maintain the service roads within the cemetery. If new roads are necessary or if problems exist that cemetery personnel cannot repair the City Street Department will be asked to assist. If new roads are paved or if general paving is done it is done through the City Street Department or bid out commercially.

Equipment Maintenance

Light equipment maintenance is performed by cemetery personnel following manufacturer's recommendations. If major maintenance is required, it is done by the city mechanics. Records are kept for any maintenance or repairs that are done.

Cemetery Complex

The Cemetery Records Building includes an office, workshop, and two garage bays. This building houses all equipment, tools, office supplies, and cemetery supplies. General building maintenance is performed by cemetery staff. Other city or commercial entities provide assistance for those situations that require attention beyond the cemetery staff's ability to address.

Staff Training

Cemetery personnel take advantage of all general training that is provided by the City. Specialized staff training is done by the cemetery sexton or individuals appointed by the sexton. Training elements include equipment operation, safety procedures, customer relations, cemetery etiquette, and so forth.