

Title	Monument Safety Management Policy		
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1 Introduction

Pursuant to Section 104 of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003 (the Act), memorials (including headstones, plaques and monuments) and places of interment are the property of the Right of Interment holder (ROI holder) and they have the primary responsibility for maintaining a memorial. Equally persons responsible for the establishment of a building for ceremonies have the primary responsibility for maintaining that building. However, as time passes, it may become difficult to identify or trace the ROI holder or their legal heirs or the persons responsible for the establishment of a building for ceremonies.

The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (GMCT) has a general responsibility to maintain the cemetery in respectful order. This duty also includes ensuring that all memorials are in a safe condition, and that they do not interfere with adjacent monuments or intrude into other interment or visitation areas.

1.1 Purpose

To provide practical guidelines to ensure the conditions of all monuments, headstones, plaques, and places of interment are maintained in a condition that is safe and does not intrude on other interments or places of visitation at GMCT.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to GMCT staff, ROI holders and customers engaged in activities relating to maintaining memorials and places of interment.

This policy does not apply to the placement of flowers and ornaments at a designated memorial within GMCT grounds. This matter is managed separately under policy #91 Flowers and Ornament Policy.

This policy does not apply to the condition assessments of Private Mausoleums within GMCT grounds. This matter is managed separately under policy #100 Private Mausoleum Policy and covered in the legal agreement between the ROI holder and GMCT which stipulates the responsibility for ongoing maintenance of Private Mausoleum is the responsibility of the ROI

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holder. External visual inspections of the Private Mausoleums are carried out in a cyclical timeframe with a report forwarded to the ROI holders for rectifications works, where necessary. This aligns with GMCT's Asset Management Policy #018 in managing GMCT assets.

2 Policy Statement

In line with GMCT's commitment to safety and sustainability, and responsibility to maintain the cemetery in respectful order, a program of monument safety management will be undertaken.

3 Policy Details

The Works Coordinator and / or the Monument Safety Officer will conduct routine inspections of monuments, memorials, places of interment and buildings for ceremonies based on priority (see **Monument Safety Procedure** for inspection list). They also conduct on the spot / ad hoc inspections at areas visited in the course of their daily duties, or following a report from a family member, visitor, or another staff member. An incident report is submitted for any fallen, vandalised, or unsafe items.

In response to an incident report:

- The Burial Operations Supervisor for each region will arrange for the item to be assessed by an appropriately qualified person, in accordance with the **Monument and Foundation Inspection Checklist**. If the item is considered unsafe, the area will be cordoned off and appropriate warning notices displayed for GMCT staff and the community.
- Assessment of the cause of monument movement/damage will be made by the appropriate GMCT staff (with input from external experts, where required), to inform the action and costs required to make-safe / repair being via an insurance claim or GMCT or the ROI.
- Customer experience staff will attempt to contact the ROI holder to inform them of the required action (usually repair), and if GMCT has been required to remove or make safe the memorial (as applicable).
- Diligent enquiries must be made by GMCT in an attempt to contact ROI holders. Diligent enquiries include attempting to contact ROI holders via:
 - contact details on record
 - searching the White Pages directory, and
 - placing an advertisement in a local newspaper or other prominent local publication

If the ROI cannot be contacted or contact is made and they refuse to repair, remove or make safe the memorial, then the GMCT will either:

- lay any fallen or unsafe items with any inscriptions facing upwards, on the place of interment, or;
- make the memorial safe by removing the item in accordance with the Act and placing it with any inscriptions visible, in a designated area, with location details added to the CRM record.

The GMCT will note the costs associated with this work for possible future debt recovery.

In the event that GMCT are made aware of vandalism caused to a memorial, headstone, plaque or monument, and the ROI holder is able to be contacted;

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- Customer Experience staff will contact the ROI holder to supply the relevant insurance forms and assist the ROI holder to lodge a claim with the relevant insurer to facilitate rectification of the vandalised item.

4 References & Related Materials

4.1 Legislation & Regulations

- Cemeteries & Crematorium Act 2003 (Vic)
- Cemeteries & Crematorium Regulations 2005 (Vic)
- Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

4.2 Related GMCT Documents

- Monument Safety Procedures
- Monument and Foundation Inspection Checklist
- 123 Inventory (Rights of interment) Policy
- 92 GMCT Management of Stonemasons Policy
- 91 Flower and Ornament Policy
- 100 Private Mausoleum Policy
- 018 Asset Management Policy

5 Engagement and Consultation

This policy was presented at GMCT's Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for consultation and feedback.

6 Policy History

Date	Details of Change
February 2013	First Adopted as Policy 104: Management of Fallen Monuments
February 2023	Policy updated to 104 Monument Safety Management Policy & Monument Safety Guidelines converted to Monument Safety Procedure Policy cross referenced to Flower and Ornament Policy (91), Private Mausoleum Policy (100) and Asset Management Policy (018)

7 Definitions

Term	Definition
(ROI) Right of Interment Holder	The right of interment holder is the person who can authorise a burial or interment of cremated remains, as well as the establishment or alteration of a memorial such as a headstone or plaque.

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Diligent inquires	Diligent inquiries include attempting to contact holders via: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• contact details on record• searching the White Pages directory, and• placing an advertisement in a local newspaper or other prominent local publication
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