

Title	Flower and Ornament Policy		
Document Sponsor	Chief Operating Officer		
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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (GMCT) recognises that visitors bring and place decorations, memorabilia and other items on graves and/or memorials, and that such items provide a place of harmony and may hold particular sentimental, cultural and/or religious significance to those visitors.

However, such items are susceptible to theft or damage by birds and the elements, and their placement in operational and high-traffic areas may pose a risk to the health and safety of GMCT staff and visitors. This policy provides a basis for the judicious control and/or removal of these items.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to the placement of any item at a designated memorial within GMCT grounds, with the following exceptions: approved plaques and stonemasonry; cameos, vases and ornaments that form part of an authorised monument or memorial.

2 Policy Statement

GMCT is not liable for the care or maintenance of items placed on a grave or memorial, and do not accept responsibility for theft, loss or damage to items.

GMCT staff will remove any item that poses a risk to the safety of any person, or impedes the operations of GMCT staff in conducting their ordinary duties.

3 Policy Details

In general, the number of decorations may not exceed three small items per memorial and must be fully contained within the area of the approved memorial space. Decorations must not be placed on lawn areas as they impede the ability of GMCT staff to undertake regular maintenance, and must not be attached to any park features, including but not limited to trees, shrubs, roses, fencing, seats, posts, pathways, signage and adjacent graves.

3.1 Publication of Guidelines

GMCT will produce and maintain a customer-facing brochure outlining the principles of this policy and providing specific guidelines relating to the placement of flowers and decorations. From January 1st 2023, this brochure will be accessible via the GMCT web site and provided to all pre-need and at-need customers at the time of purchase.

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3.2 Flowers

Fresh cut and artificial flowers are permitted at all outdoor memorial locations.

Fresh cut flowers **are not** permitted inside GMCT Mausolea Chapels or Annexures at any time.

GMCT will remove and dispose of any fresh flowers found inside the mausolea, without notice.

GMCT staff will remove and dispose of wired flower arrangements, wilted flowers, and flowers that have been blown from their vases (or moved by birds), as part of scheduled maintenance activities.

GMCT supplies plastic stake vases at areas of high visitation. Personal vases are permitted provided they are non-breakable, not listed as a restricted item, and on the condition that the care, maintenance and security of such vases is the sole responsibility of the person placing the item.

3.3 Restricted Items

GMCT reserves the right to restrict the placement of any items that may pose a risk to the health and safety of visitors and/or staff, including but not limited to:

Glass or ceramic items	Tins or aluminium cans	Fragile or breakable items
Non-standard edging, curbing, stones and bark	Decorative pickets, fencing or border decorations	Metal ground spikes used to hang decorations
Seating, benches	Items with fillers that attract vermin	Small items that could be ingested by a child

Where restricted items are present, the items will be removed in accordance with this policy.

3.4 Removal of Items

Any restricted item placed on a memorial will be removed and placed in on-site storage for a period of six weeks. Items remaining unclaimed after **six weeks** from the date of removal will be disposed of in a manner determined by GMCT.

3.5 Children's Memorials

In recognition of the particular sensitivities attached to children's memorials, GMCT will exercise this policy in such areas at their sole discretion with care and empathy, and will effect removal only where entirely necessary to ensure the health and safety of visitors and staff or maintain harmony of the area for all visitors.

Visitors should be mindful of children visiting the area. Items must be safe for children (not ingestible, no sharp edges, unbreakable).

3.6 Ceremonial Use of Fire

Candles, lanterns and other types of ceremonial fire are not permitted in GMCT mausolea.

Candles and ceremonial fire of any kind must not be left alight. If unattended for any period of time, GMCT staff are required to extinguish naked flames. This includes any fire/candles/oil burners contained within a memorial box.

GMCT may, on specific or general advice from the Fire Rescue Victoria, Country Fire Authority, State Emergency Service, or other authorised body, restrict or prohibit the use of candles and all types of ceremonial fire on GMCT grounds for a period of time, as deemed necessary. Ceremonial use of fire is prohibited on all declared Total Fire Ban days.

3.7 Plantings

GMCT retains the responsibility for managing all plantings on cemetery grounds and personal plantings are not permitted on graves or memorials. Unapproved plantings will be assessed by GMCT staff, and removal may be effected where necessary to ensure the integrity of the site's existing flora and fauna. Unauthorised planting within a memorial area, where required to be removed to conform to this policy, must be removed by the ROI or their nominated agent, at their own expense.

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3.8 Temporary Markers

Temporary markers, where permitted, may be placed for a period of twelve months from the date of the interment. After twelve months, GMCT staff may remove these items in accordance with this policy.

3.9 Mausolea items

The use of adhesives to affix unauthorized items to mausoleum stone is prohibited as it can damage the stone. Any costs associated with the removal / repair of stone damaged in this manner, will be borne by the ROI.

4 References & Related Materials

4.1 Legislation & Regulations

Cemeteries & Crematoria Act 2003 (Vic).

Cemeteries & Crematoria Regulations 2015 (Vic).

4.2 Related GMCT Documents

Flowers and Ornaments in your Cemetery (brochure to be available from 1st January 2023 in digital and printed format).

5 Policy History

Date	Details of Change
16/08/2016	Reformatted into new template. Abridged with no loss of fidelity. Definitions of key terms added. Commitment to publish customer guidelines formalised.
01/08/22	Updated policy with minor updates namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update the sponsor details.• 3.1 Publication of guidelines – added detail of customer facing document provision• Addition to 3.3 restricted items• Clarification 3.7 Plantings – unauthorised planting to be removed by ROI at their expense• Addition of 3.9 Mausolea items

6 Definitions

Term	Definition
Ceremonial fire	Includes candles, oil burners, lanterns, incense, joss sticks and other similar items associated with ceremonies.
Temporary marker	Refers to the variety of marker generally supplied by the funeral director to mark the location of a grave until monumental works are completed.
Small items	Toys, trinkets, memorabilia, figurines, personal effects.