



Renfrewshire Council Cemetery Management Policy

Ensuring a safe and equitable burial site for all.

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www.renfrewshire.gov.uk



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1.0 Policy Overview

1.1 The policy outlines Renfrewshire Council's approach to managing and maintaining burial grounds in a safe, respectful, and inclusive manner. The key objectives of this policy are:

1. Maintain accurate and relevant records.
2. Ensure cemetery grounds are safe, well-maintained, and respectful of all visitors.
3. Provide clear guidelines for burials, lair holder responsibilities, and the installation of memorials.
4. Ensure compliance with all relevant local and national regulations and observe guidance where appropriate.
5. Address all requests fairly, transparently, and efficiently.

2.0 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all individuals, organisations, and contractors operating within cemeteries and churchyards under the jurisdiction of Renfrewshire Council, which acts as the Burial Authority. It governs all aspects relating to burial plots and memorials. Additionally, the policy serves as a foundation for the "Management Rules Regulating Cemeteries and Churchyards" overseen by Renfrewshire Council.

3.0 Governance:

3.1 The following pieces of legislation and policy within Scotland, form the governance for cemetery management and the policy ensures adherence to the following pieces of legislation:

1. Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act (2016)
2. Associated Regulations within The Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016
3. Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
4. Occupiers Liability (Scotland) Act (1960)
5. Section 112 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act (1982)
6. Scottish Government Burial Ground Memorial Safety: Local authority guidance
7. Dog Fouling Law (Scotland) Act 2003
8. Renfrewshire Council Zero Tolerance Policy on Violence and Aggression
9. Renfrewshire Council Operational Tree Policy
10. Renfrewshire Council Data Protection Policy
11. Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act (2010)

4.0 The Exclusive Right of Burial (ERoB):

4.1 Any person aged 18 or over may apply to Renfrewshire Council to purchase an ERoB in a lair. Renfrewshire Council reserves the right to refuse an application unless it is prohibited to do so by law. A successful applicant shall be granted an ERoB upon payment of the appropriate fee as detailed within the Council's Fees and Charges. Renfrewshire Council will record the sale of the ERoB with the name and address of the person in whom the ERoB vests, the date of sale and the lair to which this relates. A Lair Certificate will then be issued to the Lair Holder along with a copy of this Policy and the Management Rules for Cemetery Operations. As of 1 March 2026, ERoB will be issued for a period of 25 years and subject to 10 year extensions thereafter.

- 4.2 The above does not apply in the case of National Assistance Burials where interments take place within a common plot. No one person holds ERoB, however all interments and relevant information will be retained in Council records. Details of National Assistance burials are available on Renfrewshire Council website.

Applications to purchase an ERoB may only be made when the lair to which it relates is to be used for a prearranged funeral. Accordingly, an ERoB may only be purchased at the time of booking a funeral.

5.0 Right of Access

- 5.1 Cemeteries remain open on a twenty-four hour basis. Renfrewshire Council may prohibit access to all or part of a cemetery when it considers it necessary to do so. This maybe on a temporary basis or by way of prescribed opening and closing times. Public communication will be given to advise of the specific location where access is to be prohibited, detailing the extent and duration.
- 5.2 No persons shall enter or wilfully remain within an area where access has been prohibited.
- 5.3 Access shall be only by entrances and exits provided.
- 5.4 Access to the cemetery out with daylight hours is at a person's own risk.
- 5.5 Pets are permitted within a cemetery but must be always kept on a lead which shall be no greater than 2 metres in length and under control. No commercial businesses may use Council premises for the exercise of dogs/pets.
- 5.6 Car parking facilities provided at a cemetery are for the convenience of patrons. Renfrewshire Council shall not be held responsible for any damage to vehicles, or other property left in the car parking facilities however such damage may be caused.
- 5.7 All vehicles must always remain on the roadway with respect given for roadside graves and paths. This excludes access for which Renfrewshire Council grants express permission. If council staff instruct vehicles to be moved to allow access for funeral traffic, this must be observed.
- 5.8 Access to some lairs may not always be accessible by car. If footway access is difficult or unsafe, cemetery staff will endeavour to clear pathways or obstructions to allow safe access to lairs where this is feasible. Care should be taken by individuals in outdoor environments.
- 5.9 No vehicle may be driven at a speed exceeding 5 miles per hour and must be driven with due care and attention.

6.0 Notice of Interment

- 6.1 Notice of interment in respect of new unopened lairs must be given to Renfrewshire Council no later than 2 days prior to the funeral.
- 6.2 Notice of interment of re-opening of lairs for coffin interments must be given to Renfrewshire Council no later than 10am, 4 days prior to the funeral.
- 6.3 Notice for the interment of cremated remains must be given 2 days prior to the funeral. Notice shall be given by submitting to Renfrewshire Council all required statutory and internal applications. Or any such application as prescribed by government ministers or inspections as per the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016.

- 6.4 All interments shall be recorded, specifying the lair, depth achieved, date of interment and the name and age of the person interred, and any other information deemed necessary by Renfrewshire Council.

7.0 Provision of Bearers

- 7.1 Funeral Directors are responsible for ensuring a sufficient number of bearers to convey the coffin from hearse to the interment into the lair. If persons acting on behalf of Renfrewshire Council are required to assist, neither they nor Renfrewshire Council will be held accountable for any damage caused during that assistance including but not limited to damage to hearses and coffins.
- 7.2 Coffin weights must be stated on all interment paperwork for risk assessment of any manual handling exercise and to assist Officers when determining the location of a new lair.

8.0 Cemetery Data Management:

- 8.1 All information relating to lairs shall be electronically stored on Renfrewshire Councils' approved software management database. This data shall be saved in a Cloud format with storage protection. Data includes lair holder details, interment history, memorial safety inspections, letters, and any other relevant information. Access to the database will be password secured, with information available on request subject to Renfrewshire Councils' Data Protection Policy.
- 8.2 All information recorded in respect of the deceased, i.e. name, age, occupation, place of death, and burial location is deemed to be in the public domain. Information recorded in relation to the Lair Holder is subject to the Data Protection Act and will only be used by the Burial Authority or their Agent in relation to the operation of the Burial Service.

9.0 Fees, Charges and Services

- 9.1 All fees and charges in connection with interments, lair certificates etc shall be reviewed each financial year and published on Renfrewshire Council's website. Renfrewshire Council reserves the right to amend fees and charges at any time during the financial year subject to Board approval when necessary.

10.0 Memorials

- 10.1 All memorials, including plaques, headstones, and monuments must be first authorised by the lair holder and approved by Renfrewshire Council.
- 10.2 Conditions prescribing memorial works, to include installation, reinstatement, or remedial works are outlined in Renfrewshire Council Scheme for Memorial Masons.
- 10.3 Memorials should be erected in accordance with industry standards and subject to Renfrewshire Council's memorial safety inspection programme.
- 10.4 For the avoidance of doubt, memorials, headstones etc are privately owned with all associated costs liable to lair holder.

- 10.5 One floral container (glass or ceramic is prohibited) or plaque/tablet may be laid at the head of the lair or immediately in front of the memorial headstone. Beyond this, the laying of kerbs, artificial wreaths, pall stones, globes and the like or the planting of trees, shrubs, bushes or similar planting is not permitted, and such items will be removed after lair holders have been advised and given the opportunity to remove, where feasible. If any item restricts access to neighbouring lairs, either for maintenance, or for burials, items will be removed without notice if necessary.
- 10.6 The Council reserves the right to cut back or remove any unsuitable material placed on or planted in the lair, or which may interfere with the stability of adjacent memorials, paths, or walls.
- 10.7 Renfrewshire Council shall not be liable for any damaged caused to a lair, structure, or item out with the permitted area however such damage was caused.
- 10.8 Within woodland settings no memorials are permitted on the lairs. Instead, families have the option to purchase a memorial plaque within the burial site or plant seeds of wildflowers for the benefits of biodiversity.
- 10.9 All conditions are provided to a lair holder, along with their lair certificate. From time-to-time written notice may have to be given where a lair falls below the standard or requirements. Normally opportunity is given for the lair holder to address this, however in cases where the lair is posing a risk to health and safety this may be reduced or items removed without notice. Renfrewshire Council may also recover any reasonable expenses from the lair holder. Memorial wreaths shall be removed at the sole discretion of Renfrewshire Council.
- 10.10 A designated Memorial Garden for children under 18 is provided within Hawkhead Cemetery. There is an option to have a memorial plaque inscribed with a personal message in the garden which is arranged by Council staff.

11.0 Install of Foundations

- 11.1 All headstone installations must be approved by Renfrewshire Council through the submission of a Permit Application Form. This form must include the dimensions of the headstone and details of the Memorial Mason responsible for the work.
- 11.2 Renfrewshire Council is responsible for the installation of foundations within our cemeteries. Once approval has been granted by Renfrewshire Council, all headstones must be securely installed on foundations that comply with British Standard BS8415.
- 11.3 For further details on foundation standards, refer to the NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) or BRAMM (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) reference guides. Both the foundation and headstone installation must fully adhere to these standards.

12.0 Registration Scheme for Memorial Masons

- 12.1 Renfrewshire Council is dedicated to ensuring the safety of memorials within its burial grounds while minimising its direct impact through internal processes. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure that all memorials are installed, maintained, and inspected to the highest safety standards, thereby reducing the need for Council intervention in inspecting and lowering headstones.
- 12.2 All new headstones must be installed exclusively by members of the Registration Scheme for Memorial Masons. These installations must meet approved industry standards and will be tested in line with periodic memorial safety inspections.

- 12.3 Only Scheme members are permitted to erect, re-erect, or carry out any works on memorials within Council-managed burial grounds. Membership requires strict adherence to the scheme's conditions, guaranteeing compliance with established safety guidelines.
- 12.4 Renfrewshire Council retains the right to refuse access to anyone not part of the scheme. For more details on the Registration Scheme for Memorial Masons, please refer to Appendix B.

13.0 Memorials Safety: Ensuring a Safe Burial Ground

- 13.1 Renfrewshire Council is responsible for the safety of all visitors and staff within all cemeteries and churchyards under its control. Scottish Government Guidance published in 2019 requires all burial authorities to operate an inspection programme and take immediate suitable action to ensure a safe burial site for all.
- 13.2 All memorials are inspected on a rolling programme by either trained council staff or approved contractors. A risk-based model is used to determine the outcome of all inspections, with unsafe memorials either laid flat or temporarily barred off until further assessment. All inspections are in line with industry training delivered by external third-party trainers. Any headstones which require immediate action to be made safe, are the responsibility of the lair holder to re-erect. Renfrewshire Council are unable to reimburse any costs for headstones which are laid flat and deemed unsafe through the actions of the Memorial Inspection Programme.
- 13.3 Renfrewshire Council is committed to ensuring public safety in burial sites. Memorials assessed as posing an immediate risk to public safety will only be laid flat when necessary. This action will be undertaken by trained staff members who possess the qualifications and experience to make such assessments.
- 13.4 The Council will prioritise all reasonably practicable measures to prevent the need for lowering headstones. Efforts will also be made to contact lair holders and notices of intended inspections will be displayed in cemeteries. The outcomes of inspections will be documented and made available upon request. For a detailed overview of the inspection procedure, please refer to Appendix C.
- 13.5 Renfrewshire Council is committed to ensuring that graves are treated with respect and dignity at all times. When a headstone is laid flat, every effort will be made to position it straight and aligned with the lair, with the inscription clearly visible. Additionally, all necessary measures will be taken to ensure the headstone is left in a safe and secure condition.

14.0 Lair Provision

- 14.1 The total number of coffins that can be interred within a lair shall be determined as follows:
- 14.2 No lair shall contain more than three coffins.
- 14.3 No given lair shall contain more coffins than that specified by Renfrewshire Council.
- 14.4 No lair shall contain more coffins than the physical characteristic of the Lair permits which are determined by Council process of work.
- 14.5 No coffin exceeding a maximum length of 2040mm or a maximum width of 770mm shall be permitted to be interred within an individual lair. Interment of a coffin exceeding such dimensions will only be permitted within an area of ground comprising two adjacent lairs in which the lair holder shall have EROB in both and upon payment of the fee for each lair.

- 14.6 Lairs within the Woodland Burial Site, Lochwinnoch cemetery, hold no more than one interment. Woodland lairs cost the same as conventional lairs however adjacent lairs can be purchased for family members who wish to be buried together, where ground conditions permit.
- 14.7 No interments of any kind are permitted on or above a lair. This includes scattering of cremated remains.
- 14.8 All cremated remains interred within a lair must be contained within an urn or casket and are subject to all provisions of the Burial & Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016.
- 14.9 Renfrewshire Council will be able to give an estimation of the total number of interments possible within a given lair only after it has been opened for the first time.
- 14.10 The location of a lair shall be determined by Renfrewshire Council. Factors such as weight and dimensions of the coffin and/or religious beliefs/faiths shall be taken into consideration when determining the location of a lair.

15.0 Grounds Maintenance Within Cemeteries

- 15.1 Renfrewshire Council grass cutting schedule runs on a 14 day cycle between April and October. There may be occasions where maintenance is required out with this cycle for e.g as a result of adverse weather. Area schedules and further information can be found on Renfrewshire Council website.
- 15.2 Proactive weed control commences in April each year this includes the spraying and removal of weeds across the cemetery estate.
- 15.3 Maintenance of hedges and other vegetation is carried out as part of an annual maintenance programme.
- 15.4 The Woodland Burial Site will be maintained once per year, normally in late summer/early Autumn.
- 15.5 Due to the large number of trees in cemeteries, council staff make effort to clear fallen leaves, but this will be prioritised in accordance with impact to service users, and where feasible to do so.
- 15.6 Opening of lairs shall be done by cemetery employees only. When opening a lair for burial Renfrewshire Council may place any equipment and the soil from that lair onto an adjacent lair until the opened lair has been backfilled. Where contact details are available the lair holder will be notified in writing prior to this.
- 15.7 Lairs which have recently been opened will be monitored and inspected at set intervals following interment for a period of 8 weeks. During this time remedial action may have to be taken, with final dressing taking place at the end of this period.
- 15.8 Road and pathway repairs are subject to availability of Renfrewshire Council Roads and Infrastructure Services and will be actioned as per their schedule of priority and/or on a safety prescribed basis.

16.0 Prevention of Nuisance

- 16.1 Any persons behaving in such a manner as to endanger their own or other persons safety or disobeying reasonable instructions given by Council staff may be subject to the powers of Council Officers, this may include being asked to leave the burial ground. Renfrewshire council

operate a zero tolerance policy to violence and aggression towards staff and members of the public, the use of profanity and or violence and aggression will be immediately reported to the police.

17.0 Children and Young People Accessing Cemeteries

- 17.1 Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.
- 17.2 Cemeteries can pose several hazards due to their natural landscape and memorials. Care should be taken when within the cemeteries and any accidents or incidents should be reported to Renfrewshire Council. No person should climb upon any tree, shrub, wall, fence or railing, or upon any memorial or any other type of structure.

18.0 Powers of Council Officers

- 18.1 An Authorised Council Officer may ask any person to leave the cemetery if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the person has contravened, is contravening, or is about to contravene any of the rules within this Policy.
- 18.2 Council Officers may make exclusion orders on any person contravening, contravened or likely to contravene the rules of this Policy. Such an order may remain in effect for a period of no longer than one year from the date of its creation.
- 18.3 The authorised signatories for cemetery operations are the authorised Officers in Neighbourhood Services. Any burial, headstone installation or change to lair ownership will require approval from an authorised signatory.

19.0 Lair Ownership

- 19.1 More than one individual can be registered as a Lair Holder, except in the case of a trustee. In the case where there are multiple individuals on the register, consent must be agreed by all parties to exercise the EROB in respect of the Lair to which it relates. This also applies to rights of ownership of a memorial at the lair and responsibilities relating to this.
- 19.2 No individual shall hold EROB in more than three lairs.
- 19.3 Upon the death of the lair holder, their representative, as ascertained in a manner hereinafter provided, shall be entitled on production of evidence right to the reasonable satisfaction of Renfrewshire Council, to be registered as the Lair holder in Renfrewshire Council records. In such cases a new certificate shall be issued, but only on surrender of the original certificate, or accounted for satisfactorily. To prevent disputes, where rights are being exercised, or transferred without the permission of the lairholder, a Statutory Declaration will be required.
- 19.4 The lair holder shall, be permitted to bequeath the lair to any member of his or her family or to a stranger. Relevant documents should be submitted to the Council. Renfrewshire Council shall not be responsible for any misunderstanding or error in the acceptance in good faith of any person claiming to be the legal lair holder, or to have a right of burial even though it should be ascertained subsequently that such a claim was unfounded.

20.0 Provision of Trees and benches within Cemeteries

- 20.1 No plant, tree or vegetation of any kind may be planted on a lair or within a cemetery ground without express consent of Renfrewshire Council. Any unauthorised plant, tree or vegetation

may be removed without notice. All tree management decisions within cemeteries will be considered under section 2.10 of the Renfrewshire Council Operational Tree Policy.

- 20.2 No bench or seating of any kind may be installed or placed within cemetery grounds without the express consent of Renfrewshire Council. Benches may be subject to displacement or removal for the purposes of opening or creating a lair for interment. Renfrewshire Council will contact the owner of the bench prior to this if contact details are available.

21.0 Working with Recognised Groups

- 21.1 Renfrewshire Council's Cemetery Management Team is committed to fostering a collaborative and inclusive approach by working proactively with recognised Friends of Cemetery Groups. This partnership aims to enhance the management and operations of our cemetery estates.
- 21.2 Council officers will hold regular meetings with group representatives to discuss the cemetery operating model, gather feedback, and work to address the needs of all lair holders across Renfrewshire. In return, recognised groups are expected to adhere to the terms outlined in the charter (Appendix A) and engage with Council officers with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- 21.3 The Council acknowledges the sensitive and emotional nature of cemetery management for bereaved families. Our shared goal is to continually improve cemetery operations, ensuring fair, safe, and equitable burial sites for everyone.

22.0 Policy Review

- 22.1 At least one month before amending policy Renfrewshire Council shall give notice in accordance with governing legislation. Amendments require approval from an authorised signatory.
- 22.2 Some operational service changes that are not directed by law can be agreed by the governing Council Board. Operational reports and agendas will be published on the Renfrewshire Council website or provided on paper if requested.
- 22.3 Any changes enforced by government legislation or inspectors will take effect immediately and may not require any formal change to policy.

23.0 Complaints Procedure

- 23.1 Renfrewshire Council's Complaints Procedure can be accessed online via our website. Alternatively, this can be requested by contacting our Customer Service Centre on 0300 300 0300.
- 23.2 Should any difference or dispute arise as to interpretation of this Policy, Renfrewshire Council reserves the right to re-consider its position, but the decision of Renfrewshire Council shall be final.

- 23.3 Renfrewshire council is registered as a burial authority with both National Association of Memorial Mason (NAMM) and British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM). In case of dispute surrounding memorial works, referral to an independent body such as NAMM or BRAMM is available.

24.0 Respect for All

- 24.1 Renfrewshire Council operates a Zero Tolerance Policy on Violence and Aggression towards its workforce. This policy applies across all our cemetery sites. This includes language or behaviour in a way that is offensive, disruptive, or insulting. All incidents as such are recorded by Renfrewshire Council and if necessary, reported to Police Scotland.
- 24.2 This includes wilfully or carelessly obstructing or disturbing any cemetery employee in their duties and will be subject to Council Officer Powers and/or criminal offences.

Appendix A:

Recognised Groups Working Charter Renfrewshire Council Cemetery Management

Purpose

This charter outlines the framework for a collaborative partnership between Renfrewshire Council's Cemetery Management Team and recognised Groups working within cemeteries. The shared objective is to maintain and enhance the cemetery estates in a manner that respects the needs of lair holders, bereaved families, and the wider community.

Renfrewshire Council's values—**Fair, Helpful, Collaborators, and Learning**—serve as guiding principles in all aspects of its operations. This ethos is clearly reflected in the proactive management of cemetery operations, where the Council actively works with community groups to enhance services, address community needs, and ensure respectful and inclusive practices. By prioritizing collaboration and a learning-focused approach, the Council continually adapts to serve the community better, demonstrating fairness and helpfulness in action. This commitment not only aligns with its core values but also fosters trust and cooperation within the community.

Renfrewshire Council Responsibilities:

1. Engage Regularly: Facilitate regular meetings with recognised Groups to discuss cemetery operations, share updates, and seek feedback.
2. Provide Transparency: Offer clear communication on cemetery policies, decisions, and planned improvements.
3. Support Initiatives: Where feasible, assist Groups in delivering projects or activities that enhance cemetery management and community engagement.
4. Respect Feedback: Actively listen to and consider input from Friends of Groups, ensuring all voices are heard.
5. Ensure Safe Practices: Uphold safety standards across all cemetery operations to protect visitors, staff, and volunteers.

Recognised Groups Responsibilities:

1. Adhere to Policies: Comply with council policies, including those related to health and safety, equality, and community engagement.
2. Maintain Respect: Treat all council officers, stakeholders, and community members with fairness, dignity, and respect.
3. Promote Collaboration: Work proactively and constructively with the council to support shared goals.
4. Engage Responsibly: Ensure all communications, feedback, and actions align with the principles of mutual respect and professionalism.
5. Represent the Community: Provide balanced and constructive input that reflects the diverse views and needs of lair holders and the local community.
6. Communicate: Work to communicate the proactive efforts of the community group with council officers in a way which proactively supports the cemetery management.

Terms of Engagement

1. Mutual Respect: Both parties agree to conduct all interactions in a respectful and courteous manner.
2. Clear Communication: Both parties will aim for transparency and clarity in all correspondence.
3. Conflict Resolution: Any disputes will be addressed through a structured resolution process, prioritising mutual understanding and compromise.
4. Adherence to the Charter: Failure to comply with the terms of this charter may result in a review of the group's recognition by the council.

Joint Objectives

1. To preserve and enhance the aesthetic, cultural, and historical value of cemetery estates.
2. To ensure cemetery management practices are fair, safe, and equitable for all.
3. To foster a welcoming and inclusive environment for visitors and community members.
4. To address the needs and concerns of bereaved families sensitively and compassionately.

Review and Updates

This charter will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and aligned with the needs of all stakeholders. Any updates will be agreed upon by both Renfrewshire Council and Friends of Groups.

Appendix B:

Registration Scheme for Memorial Masons

Membership Registration

Memorial masons are invited to apply for the Registration Scheme for Memorial Masons within Renfrewshire cemeteries. This scheme ensures quality standards and provides the public with confidence that contractors operating in Renfrewshire cemeteries are appropriately qualified and insured to perform their work.

To register as Scheme Member, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. **Proof of Qualifications:** Evidence of qualifications and professional membership with an affiliated trade body.
2. **Insurance Coverage:** Proof of public liability and professional indemnity insurance at an appropriate value.
3. **Compliance Declaration:** A declaration of work processes, ensuring compliance with safety standards set by the registration body.
4. **Work Guarantee:** A commitment to providing a suitable guarantee for lairholders, ensuring the quality and safety of memorials, which will be subject to inspection by memorial safety inspectors.

Membership Review Process

Upon receiving a membership application, the service team will review the submitted documentation to ensure it meets the criteria for affiliation as an approved member. Once all requirements are satisfied, approval will be granted for one year.

Affiliation Benefits

Scheme Members will receive the following benefits:

1. **Member Status:** Recognition as a member of the Councils Scheme
2. **Identification:** Official identification as a Scheme Member.
3. **Database Inclusion:** Listing within the cemetery management system as a Scheme Member.
4. **Registration:** Reference as a Scheme Member on Renfrewshire Council website.
5. **Exclusive Rights:** Authorisation to carry out works in all Renfrewshire cemeteries.

Annual Membership Review

The service team will conduct an annual review of approved contractors. This review will consider completed works, the results of periodic audits, and feedback from service users. Upon receipt and approval of renewal documentation, the annual membership will be renewed.

Appendix C:

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Memorial Safety Inspection and Quality Assurance Process

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Memorial Safety SOP is to establish a clear, consistent, and thorough procedure for conducting memorial safety inspections. This process is designed to ensure that all memorials are inspected in accordance with safety standards and best practices, minimizing the risk of hazards while maintaining structural integrity. Additionally, this SOP outlines quality assurance measures, including random external audits and regular internal reviews, to maintain and enhance the reliability and accuracy of the inspection process.

2. Scope

The procedure applies to all qualified personnel involved in the inspection, verification, and auditing of memorial safety processes. It includes memorial safety inspectors, secondary reviewers, external assessors, and internal audit teams. The scope covers the entire process from initial inspection to quality assurance audits, ensuring a robust system of checks and balances.

3. Memorial Inspection Responsibilities

3.1 Memorial Safety Inspector (Inspector 1):

- Conducts the first stage of the inspection process, including visual inspection and hand push testing.
- Accurately records all findings in the inspection log.
- Identifies any concerns or hazards requiring further action and escalates them as needed.

3.2 Second Inspector (Inspector 2):

- Completes a secondary inspection when requested by the first inspector.
- Verifies or disputes findings from the initial inspection using independent judgment.
- Ensures all findings and verifications are documented comprehensively.

3.3 External Assessor:

- Conducts random on-site audits to independently verify the quality and accuracy of completed inspections.
- Provides feedback and recommendations to improve inspection standards and procedures.

3.4 Internal Audit Team:

Conducts quarterly reviews of inspection processes, logs, and control measures.

- Ensures that the inspection procedure aligns with internal policies and external safety regulations.
 - Identifies areas for improvement and develops corrective action plans.
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4. Procedure

4.1. Stage 1: Visual Inspection

1. A qualified memorial safety inspector performs a comprehensive visual examination of the memorial.
2. During this inspection, the inspector assesses for:
 - Visible cracks, chips, or damage to the stone.
 - Evidence of structural instability or misalignment.
 - Signs of environmental wear, such as erosion or corrosion of fixings.
3. All observations are meticulously documented in the inspection log, noting any immediate safety concerns.

4.2. Stage 2: Hand Push Test

1. The inspector carefully applies a small amount of force (a hand push) to the memorial stone to test its stability.
2. Observations during this test include:
 - The degree of movement in the stone.
 - Whether internal pins or fixing mechanisms catch and stabilise the stone.
 - Evidence of internal pins being present.
3. If movement is detected and the pins fail to hold the stone securely:
 - A second qualified inspector is requested to perform an independent assessment.

4.3. Stage 3: Second Inspector Review

1. A second qualified inspector conducts a full repeat of both the visual inspection and hand push test.
2. The second inspector verifies the findings of the first inspector, paying close attention to the following:
 - The condition and movement of the stone.
 - The effectiveness of internal fixings and stability mechanisms.
3. Findings are compared against the initial inspection results, and a final determination is made.
4. The second inspector ensures that all results and decisions are documented clearly and accurately.

4.4 Stage 4: Categorising Risk

Following the above inspection process, memorials will be categorised as follows:

Category 1 – Immediate action to make safe following inspection. This category is used for memorials which pose a risk to the health and safety of visitors and members of staff.

Category 2 – Inspection shows signs of defect, however, does not pose the highest risk to health and safety. The memorial will be reinspected within 1 year.

Category 3 – Memorial is deemed to be safe (if no defects are present) and will be reinspected within 5 years.

5. Memorial Safety Control Measures

Following inspection, memorials deemed to be of a high risk will be laid flat. This will be carried out in a respectful and safe manner, with due care taken to ensure that inscriptions are face up and visible. For category 2 memorials, notices will be placed at the lair encouraging contact with Renfrewshire Council and where possible (if contact details are available) staff will contact lair holders. Category 3 memorials will be logged and scheduled for re visit in 5 years.

6. Quality Assurance Measures

6.1. Independent Internal Audit

1. An independent assessor from within the Bereavement & Burials Service conducts random on-site audits of the inspection process.
2. The assessor evaluates:
 - The thoroughness of the inspections performed by the memorial safety inspectors.
 - The accuracy and consistency of recorded findings.
3. The assessor provides detailed feedback and recommendations to enhance inspection practices and rectify any gaps in the process.
4. Results of audits are shared with management to support continuous improvement efforts.

6.2. Internal Quality Audit

1. Internal audits will be conducted providing a comprehensive review of the memorial inspection process every quarter.
 2. This review focuses on:
 - Inspection logs and records for completeness and accuracy.
 - Adherence to prescribed procedures and safety standards.
 - Effectiveness of control measures implemented to address identified hazards.
 3. The internal audit team identifies areas for improvement and proposes actionable recommendations.
 4. Audit findings are documented in a formal report, which is circulated to senior managers.
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7. Documentation and Records

To ensure transparency and accountability, all documentation and records related to the inspection and audit process must be maintained systematically.

- **Inspection Logs:**

Detailed logs of every memorial inspection, including visual findings, hand push test results, and any additional observations or escalations.

- **Audit Reports:**

Comprehensive records of external and internal audit findings, including feedback, identified gaps, and corrective actions taken.

- **Corrective Action Logs:**

Documentation of all corrective measures implemented to address identified issues during inspections or audits.

8. Review and Update

This SOP will undergo an annual review by the internal audit team to ensure it remains aligned with current safety regulations and industry best practices. Revisions will be made as necessary to incorporate new standards or legislation, improve efficiency, and address identified shortcomings.



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