

**National Cemetery Administration**

**National Shrine Commitment**

**Operational Standards and Measures**



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**NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION**  
**NATIONAL SHRINE COMMITMENT**  
**OPERATIONAL STANDARDS AND MEASURES**

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## INTRODUCTION

This document sets forth the National Cemetery Administration's (NCA) standards for performance in the key cemetery operational areas of interments, grounds maintenance, headstones, markers, niche covers, equipment maintenance, and facilities maintenance, which have been approved and endorsed by the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs and other NCA senior managers.

The purpose of these standards is to provide guidance and direction for maintaining national cemeteries as the shrines they are intended to be and as defined below:

*A national shrine is a place of honor and memory that declares to the visitor or family member who views it that, within its majestic setting, each and every Veteran may find a sense of serenity, historic sacrifice and nobility of purpose. Each visitor should depart feeling that the grounds, the gravesites and the environs of the national cemetery are a beautiful and awe-inspiring tribute to those who gave much to preserve our Nation's freedom and way of life.*

The standards contained in this volume began with efforts by NCA workgroups of cemetery directors, foremen, and headquarters staff in November 1999 and continued with the review and evaluation of appearance standards recommended by Logistics Management Institute in fulfilling the requirements of Pub. L. 106-117, Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act of 1999, and the Study on Improvements to Veterans Cemeteries (Vol. 3, Cemetery Standards of Appearance). NCA Operational Standards and Measures, Version 1.0 was published and distributed in January 2003, version 2.0 was published in October 2004, and version 3.0 was published in October 2006, and version 3.1 in Oct 2007. This document reflects changes based on the 2009 Lessons Learned Conference. The document presented here is version 4.0

The standards and measures in this document should be considered as goals and requirements for the performance of key operational processes and should be applied at both open and closed national cemeteries where work is done by either a Federal or contract workforce.

# Interment Operations

## Scope and Purpose

The interment operations standards include all actions from initial application processing to preparing for establishment of turf on the gravesite.

Each standard is supported by measures that are used to gauge success at meeting the established standards. Several standards may require geographically defined Standard Operating Procedures to account for variances in climate, topography, and soil conditions throughout the system.

### 1. Application Processing/Scheduling of Interments

**Standard 1.1: Committal services are scheduled to assure minimal delays for families.**

**Measure 1.1a:** The percent of committal services scheduled in [BOSS](#) within two hours of application receipt when eligibility documentation is provided.

**Target:** 98%

**Measure 1.1b:** The percent of committal services scheduled in [BOSS](#) within 48 hours of application receipt when eligibility documentation is not provided.

**Target:** 98%

**Measure 1.1c:** The percent of funeral directors who respond to the annual [Survey of Satisfaction with National Cemeteries](#) and indicate it takes less than 2 hours to confirm the scheduling of an interment.

**Target:** 75%

### 2. Layout of Burial Sections

**Standard 2.1: Interment sections match gravesite layout plan.**

**Requirement 2.1a:** Occupied gravesites match the current [gravesite layout plans](#).

**Target 2.1a:** Yes

**Measure 2.1b:** The percent of cemetery [gravesite layout plans](#) which are updated semi-annually by the Memorial Service Network offices.

**Target 2.1b:** 100%

### **3. Site Preparation**

**Standard 3.1: Each day's gravesites present a neat appearance prior to burial.**

**Requirement 3.1: Gravesites are excavated properly, at the proper depth, spoils or sod appropriately removed or made presentable, and headstones for reopeners appropriately placed.**

**Target 3.1: Yes**



**Standard 3.2: Integrity of existing graves around the worksite will be preserved.**

**Requirement 3.2a: Corrective action to repair damage through daily operations is initiated by close of business the same day.**

**Target 3.2a: Yes**

**Measure 3.2b: Number of complaints from visitors and family members about the condition of a grave damaged due to interment activities**

**Target 3.2b: 0 Complaints**

**Standard 3.3: Open graves are identified and protected.**

**Requirement 3.3: Open graves are protected by appropriate devices while unattended.**

**Target 3.3: Yes**



**Standard 3.4: Outer burial receptacles awaiting installation are sufficient for the needs of the cemetery and placed in an orderly manner in an appropriate location.**

**Requirement 3.4a: Outer burial receptacles are placed in a manner so they do not obstruct occupied graves or hinder the flow of traffic through the cemetery.**

**Target 3.4a: Yes**



Requirement 3.4b: The cemetery maintains an [adequate inventory](#) of outer burial receptacles.

Target 3.4b: Yes

Requirement 3.4c: Outer burial receptacles required for future installation are stored in an appropriate location away from public view.

Target 3.4c: Yes



#### 4. Committal Service

Standard 4.1: Committal services are conducted with dignity and respect for the decedent, and compassion for their loved ones.

Measure 4.1a: The number of complaints from visitors and family members about the committal service when the national cemetery is responsible.

Target 4.1a: 0 Complaints

Measure 4.1b: The percent of respondents to the annual [Survey of Satisfaction with National Cemeteries](#) who were somewhat or very satisfied with the committal service

Target 4.1b: 94%

Standard 4.2: Committal services are conducted in clean and orderly shelters that provide for the safety, privacy, and special needs of the family.

Measure 4.2: The percent of respondents to the annual [Survey of Satisfaction with National Cemeteries](#) who agree or strongly agree that the committal shelter was clean, free of safety hazards and private.

Target 4.2: 98%



Standard 4.3: Veterans receive a committal service or memorial service.

Requirement 4.3: The cemetery provides a committal service or has a program to memorialize [unaccompanied Veterans](#).

Target 4.3: Yes

## **5. Verification and Handling of Remains**

**Standard 5.1:** All caskets and urns are checked and verified to assure accurate placement, and are undamaged by cemetery personnel.

**Measure 5.1a:** The percent of caskets and urns that are properly tagged and placed in the correct gravesite.

**Target 5.1a:** 100%

**Measure 5.1b:** The percent of caskets or urns that are undamaged by cemetery staff from receipt through interment operations.

**Target 5.1b:** 100%



## **6. Appearance of Gravesites and Active Burial Sections**

**Standard 6.1:** Each day's burial/niche sites are covered, initially groomed, marked, and presentable for visitors before close of business each day.

**Requirement 6.1a:** Daily interment or inurnment sites are marked with a correct and aligned temporary marker.

**Target 6.1a:** Yes



**Requirement 6.1b:** Daily burials are level with the surrounding terrain, tamped, raked smooth, and made ready for the application of seed or sod.

**Target 6.1b:** Yes



**Requirement 6.1c:** Daily burials have floral arrangements neatly placed on the grave.

**Target 6.1c:** Yes



Measure 6.1d: The percent of respondents to the annual [Survey of Satisfaction with National Cemeteries](#) who agree or strongly agree that the appearance of their loved one's gravesite is excellent.

Target: 6.1d: 93%

## 7. Appearance of First Interment Sections

Standard 7.1: The active burial section presents a [disciplined evolution](#), not a construction site.

Requirement 7.1: Subsections show evidence of progress toward completion; grass is being established, headstones and markers delivered are being set, excess dirt, debris, tools and equipment are removed.

Target 7.1: Yes



# Grounds Maintenance Operations

## Scope and Purpose:

The purpose of these standards is to promote general grounds appearance that is aesthetically pleasing, is generally consistent throughout all the national cemeteries, and allows us to fulfill our national shrine commitment.

Grounds maintenance standards have been developed and include actions necessary for the initial establishment of turf on a gravesite and the perpetual maintenance of a cemetery's gravesites, assembly areas, committal shelters, visitor information areas, administration buildings, and other areas, as appropriate. Each standard is supported by measures that will be used to gauge success at meeting the established standards. Several standards may require geographically defined Standard Operating Procedures to account for variances throughout the system.

## General:

Generally, turf should be healthy, trees and shrubs should be properly maintained, roadways, curbs, and walkways should be edged and have appropriate drainage. Perpetual care requires regular and consistent maintenance procedures.

## Levels of Maintenance:

To establish maintenance priorities, areas of the cemetery are described here in order of their potential to affect the visual impression of families and visitors.

### Visually Prominent Areas

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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Interment areas   | • Public information building                                |
| • Committal service shelters  | • Visitor entrance to the administration building            |
| • Columbaria  | • Entrance gate  |
| • Areas adjacent to the main entrance road                          | • Primary roads and routes to the committal service shelters |
| • Turf, trees and planting areas adjacent to flagpole/assembly area | • Lodges and other buildings in prominent locations          |
| • Memorial walkways/paths / Monuments                               |  |

## Medium Visual Impact Areas

- Non-burial areas adjacent to secondary roads
- Areas adjoining the memorial walkways/paths
- Areas adjacent to the maintenance building and yard

## Low Visual Impact Areas

- Non-use areas
- Soil spoils areas
- Areas viewed at considerable distance

## 1. Cemetery Grounds Management Plan

Standard 1.1: All maintenance activities are included in a current [Cemetery Grounds Management Plan](#).

Measure 1.1a: The percent of national cemeteries that have a written, current [Cemetery Grounds Management Plan](#) that includes all maintenance activities and schedules for that cemetery.

Target 1.1a: 100%

Measure 1.1b: The percent of [Cemetery Grounds Management Plans](#) that are reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Target 1.1b: 100%

Measure 1.1c: The percent of National Cemeteries that are accomplishing all activities in their [Cemetery Grounds Management Plan](#).

Target 1.1c: 100%

## 2. Turf

Standard 2.1: [Visually prominent areas](#) have a well-established, healthy stand of turf.

Requirement 2.1a: [Visually prominent areas](#) are [generally weed free](#).

Target 2.1a: Yes

Requirement 2.1b: [Visually prominent areas](#) with established turf are [generally free of bare areas](#).

Target 2.1b: Yes



Requirement 2.1c: [Visually prominent areas](#) are maintained within one inch above the range of that which is professionally recommended for that type and region according to the [Cemetery Grounds Management Plan](#).

Target 2.1c: Yes



Measure 2.1d: The percent of respondents to the annual [Survey of Satisfaction with National Cemeteries](#) who agree or strongly agree that the maintenance of the cemetery grounds is excellent.

Target 2.1d: 98%

Standard 2.2: The turf used is compatible with the geographic region.

Measure 2.2: The percent of national cemeteries using turf that is compatible with the geographic region.

Target 2.2: 100%

Standard 2.3: All turf is free of debris, i.e., leaves, fallen branches and trash.

Requirement 2.3a: Turf areas are cleared of leaves and other natural debris as needed or at least weekly.

Target 2.3a: Yes

Measure 2.3b: The percent of turf in [Visually Prominent Areas](#) that is free of trash.

Target 2.3b: 100%

Standard 2.4: The grade of every gravesite blends in with adjacent grade levels.

Measure 2.4a: The percent of gravesites that have grades which are level and blend with adjacent grade levels.

Target 2.4a: 95%



Measure 2.4b: The percent of [Sunken Graves](#) that have been identified and a plan of action developed to re-establish the ground level and cover within 30 calendar days of the date identified.

Target 2.4b: 100%

**Standard 2.5: Turf areas have adequate drainage.**

**Requirement 2.5: Visually prominent areas do not show evidence of standing water.**

**Target 2.5: Yes**



**Standard 2.6: Visually prominent areas in the cemetery are properly trimmed and edged.**

**Requirement 2.6a: Headstones show turf is trimmed to the recommended mowing height.**

**Target 2.6a: Yes**



**Requirement 2.6b: Markers show turf edged vertically even with the marker and are free of trimming debris.**

**Target 2.6b: Yes**



**Requirement 2.6c: Other features on cemetery grounds are trimmed or edged within appropriate limits.**

**Target 2.6c: Yes**



**Standard 2.7: Gravesite re-openers avoid damage and ensure continuation of a well-established, healthy stand of turf.**

**Measure 2.7a: The percent of grave re-openers during the growing season that show healthy turf re-established within 60 days of the interment.**

**Target 2.7a: 100%**

**Measure 2.7b: The percent of winter grave re-openers that show healthy turf re-established within 60 days of the start of the growing season.**

**Target 2.7b: 100%**

**Standard 2.8: Avoid damage and ensure continuation of a well-established, healthy stand of turf during grounds maintenance operations.**

**Requirement 2.8: Turf damage due to grounds maintenance tasks is identified and corrective action initiated by close of business the same day.**

**Target 2.8: Yes**

**Standard 2.9: [Visually prominent areas](#) in which turf is not a part of the cemetery design are maintained in a manner that is appropriate for the medium in place.**

**Cemeteries Using Sand or Mineral Based Ground Cover:**

**Requirement 2.9a: Gravesite areas are cleared of leaves and other natural debris as needed or at least weekly.**

**Target 2.9a: Yes**

**Measure 2.9b: The percent of [Visually prominent areas](#) that are free of trash.**

**Target 2.9b: 100%**

**Measure 2.9c: The percent of gravesites that have grades that are level and blend with adjacent grade levels.**

**Target 2.9c: 95%**

**Measure 2.9d: The percent of [sunken graves](#) that have been identified and a plan of action developed to re-establish the ground level within 30 calendar days of the date identified.**

**Target 2.9d: 100%**

**Requirement 2.9e: [Visually prominent areas](#) do not show evidence of standing water.**

**Target 2.9e: Yes**

**Requirement 2.9f: Headstones and markers with sand or mineral based ground cover surrounding them are generally weed free.**

**Target 2.9f: Yes**

**Requirement 2.9g: Burial areas appear raked and groomed.**

**Target 2.9g: Yes**



**Measure 2.9h:** The percent of grave re-openers that are raked and groomed to return the grave to its original state within the same workday.

**Target 2.9h:** 100%

**Measure 2.9i:** The percent of respondents to the annual [Survey of Satisfaction with National Cemeteries](#) who agree or strongly agree that the overall appearance of the national cemetery is excellent.

**Target 2.9i:** 98%



### **3. Trees and Shrubs**

**Standard 3.1:** Trees and shrubs (including donated trees) are compatible with the geographic region.

**Measure 3.1:** The percent of national cemeteries using trees and shrubs that are compatible with the geographic region.

**Target 3.1:** 100%



**Standard 3.2:** Trees and shrubs are healthy, and free of pests and disease, and/or are maintained in accordance with the [Cemetery Grounds Management Plan](#).

**Requirement 3.2:** Trees and shrubs are healthy and free of pests and disease, and/or are maintained in accordance with the [Cemetery Grounds Management Plan](#).

**Target 3.2:** Yes



**Standard 3.3:** Trees and shrubs are maintained so that they enhance and do not detract from the appearance of public areas.

**Measure 3.3:** The percent of respondents to the annual [Survey of Satisfaction with National Cemeteries](#) who agree or strongly agree that the maintenance of other cemetery landscaping is excellent.

**Target 3.3:** 95%

## 4. Planting Beds

**Standard 4.1:** Cemetery [planting beds](#) are well maintained, attractive, and compatible with the geographic region.

**Measure 4.1a:** The percent of national cemeteries using plant material in the [planting beds](#) that are compatible with the geographic region.

**Target 4.1a:** 100%

**Measure 4.1b:** The percent of [planting beds](#) that are generally weed free.

**Target 4.1b:** 100%

**Requirement 4.1c:** Plants in [planting beds](#) are healthy, free of pests and disease, and are maintained in accordance with the [Cemetery Grounds Management Plan](#).

**Target 4.1c:** Yes



## 5. Waste Management

**Standard 5.1:** [Green \(organic\) waste](#) is disposed of and does not detract from cemetery appearance.

**Measure 5.1:** The percent of national cemeteries that participate in an organic recycling program.

**Target 5.1:** 80%

**Standard 5.2:** Trash is collected, disposed of, and does not detract from cemetery appearance.

**Measure 5.2a:** The percent of national cemeteries that have central trash collection points established in locations that are concealed, or maintained to minimize public visibility.

**Target 5.2a:** 100%

**Requirement 5.2b:** Public-use trash containers are adequate in number and well-marked, clean, neat, and in good repair.

**Target 5.2b:** Yes

**Measure 5.2c:** The percent of national cemeteries that participate in [solid waste recycling programs](#).

**Target 5.2c:** 80%.

**Standard 5.3:** [Spoils areas](#) do not detract from cemetery appearance.

**Measure 5.3:** The percent of national cemeteries with [spoils areas](#) that are located, concealed, or maintained to minimize public visibility.

**Target 5.3:** 90%



## **6. General Maintenance**

**Standard 6.1:** Daily maintenance activities do not detract from the dignity and solemnity of the cemetery.

**Measure 6.1:** The number of complaints that are received as a result of operations, noise, equipment, etc., that intruded on the visitor's experience.

**Target 6.1:** 0 complaints.

**Standard 6.2:** All areas where cemetery operations have been conducted are neat, clean, and free of debris and equipment at the end of the workday.

**Requirement 6.2a:** Debris, equipment, tools, and supplies are removed at the conclusion of each task and at the end of the workday.

**Target 6.2a:** Yes

**Requirement 6.2b:** Roads, walkways, shelters, and burial sections are free of grounds maintenance debris by the end of the workday.

**Target 6.2b:** Yes

**Standard 6.3:** The National Cemetery Administration's floral policy is posted where the largest number of visitors will see the information.

**Measure 6.3:** The percent of national cemeteries that have floral regulations posted in [visually prominent areas](#).

**Target 6.3:** 100%



**Standard 6.4: Containers for vases are well marked, and the containers and vases are in good condition.**

**Requirement 6.4a: Containers for floral vases are well marked, clean, neat, and in good repair.**

**Target 6.4a: Yes**

**Requirement 6.4b: Floral vases are clean and in good repair.**

**Target 6.4b: Yes**



# **Headstone, Marker and Niche Cover Operations**

## **Scope and Purpose**

The headstone, marker, and niche cover operations standards include all actions from the processing of the initial request through the order, manufacture and delivery of the headstone, marker, or niche cover to the ongoing maintenance of the headstone, marker, or niche cover.

Each standard is supported by measures that are used to gauge success at meeting the established standards.

## **1. Headstone/Marker/Niche Cover/Application/Order**

**Standard 1.1: The request for a headstone, marker, or niche cover is completed within prescribed time frames.**

**Measure 1.1: The percent of headstone, marker, and niche cover requests that are inscription approved (released from the cemetery in BOSS) within seven calendar days of interment.**

**Target 1.1: 100%**

**Standard 1.2: Inscription data are accurate and complete.**

**Measure 1.2: The percent of inscriptions ordered by national cemeteries that are accurate and complete.**

**Target 1.2: 99%**

## **2. Delivery/Inspection/Storage**

**Standard 2.1: All headstones, markers, and niche covers are inspected and verified for contractor accuracy and quality.**

**Measure 2.1a: The percent of inscribed headstones, markers, and niche covers received damaged that are reported and reordered within two workdays of delivery.**

**Target 2.1a: 100%**

**Measure 2.1b: The percent of headstones, markers, and niche covers received with incorrect inscriptions that are reported and reordered within two workdays of delivery or inscription on site.**

**Target 2.1b: 100%**

**Measure 2.1c:** The percent of inscribed headstones, markers, and niche covers received with poor quality that are reported and reordered within two workdays of delivery.

**Target:** 2.1c: 100%

**Standard 2.2:** Headstones, markers, and niche covers are handled and stored to prevent damage prior to setting.

**Measure 2.2:** The percent of headstones, markers, and niche covers received annually that are replaced due to cemetery damage prior to setting.

**Target 2.2:** Less than 1%



### **3. Installing a Headstone, Marker, or Niche Cover**

**Standard 3.1:** Graves in national cemeteries are marked within 60 days of the interment.

**Measure 3.1a:** The percent of graves in national cemeteries marked with a permanent headstone, marker, or niche cover that is set within 60 days of the interment.

**Target 3.1a:** 95%

**Measure 3.1b:** The percent of headstones, markers, or niche covers set within 10 workdays of receipt.

**Target 3.1b:** 100%

**Standard 3.2:** Headstones, markers, and niche covers are properly installed.

**Measure 3.2a:** The percent of upright headstones in current active burial sections that are installed to be uniform in height (24"- 26" above ground) and horizontally and vertically aligned with inscriptions visible and installed to ensure a pleasing top line while compensating for ground contours.

**Target 3.2a:** 100%



**Measure 3.2b:** The percent of flat markers that are installed to be uniform in height (parallel with the ground, and no more than 1" above grade) and horizontally and vertically aligned.

**Target 3.2b:** 100%



**Measure 3.2c:** The percent of niche covers that are installed to be horizontally and vertically aligned. The proper rosettes and security screws are used.

**Target 3.2c:** 100%



**Measure 3.2d:** The percent of headstones set in existing sections (reopeners, reservations, etc.) that are installed to be uniform in height with headstones in that section, and are set to ensure the inscription is visible.

**Target: 3.2d:** 100%

**Requirement 3.2e:** Headstones and markers are set consistent with the [gravesite layout plan](#).

**Target 3.2e:** Yes

#### **4. Maintaining Headstones, Markers, and Niche Covers**

**Standard 4.1:** Headstones, markers, and niche covers are clean, free of debris and [objectionable accumulations](#).

**Measure 4.1a:** The percent of headstones, markers, and niche covers that do not show evidence of debris or [objectionable accumulations](#).

**Target 4.1a:** 95%



**Measure 4.1b:** The percent of respondents to the annual [Survey of Satisfaction with National Cemeteries](#) who agree or strongly agree that the upkeep of headstones, markers, and niche covers is excellent.

**Target 4.1b:** 96%

**Standard 4.2:** Proper height and alignment of each headstone and marker is maintained.

**Measure 4.2:** The percent of headstones and/or markers in a national cemetery that are at the proper height and alignment.

**Target 4.2:** 90%



**Standard 4.3:** Headstones, markers, and niche covers are not damaged by cemetery operations (e.g., interment, grounds maintenance, headstone, marker, niche cover, maintenance, and facility maintenance operations).

**Measure 4.3:** The number of headstone, marker, and niche cover replacements within the last 12 months due to damage during cemetery operations.

**Target 4.3:** Less than 0.1% of the cemetery's inventory of occupied graves.

**Standard 4.4:** Headstone, marker and niche cover inscriptions are visible and legible, as appropriate for the age, and historic significance of the marker.

**Measure 4.4:** The percent of historical headstones, markers, and niche covers replaced during the past 12 months that are replaced with a headstone, marker, or niche cover of the same dimensions, material, inscription, and features.

**Target 4.4:** 100%

**Standard 4.5:** Headstones, markers, or niche covers stolen, vandalized or damaged beyond reasonable repair by actions outside the cemetery's control (e.g., storms, automobile accidents) are repaired or replaced.

**Measure 4.5:** The percent of headstones, markers, or niche covers damaged beyond reasonable repair, stolen or defaced that are repaired or reordered within two calendar days of the date damage is identified.

**Target 4.5:** 100%

**Standard 4.6:** Headstones, markers, and niche covers that are no longer useable are disposed of in a manner that prevents reuse.

**Requirement 4.6a:** Headstones, markers, and niche covers that are no longer useable are destroyed in a manner that obliterates the inscription and disposed of to prevent reuse.

**Target 4.6a:** Yes

**Requirement 4.6b:** Bronze markers or niche covers are recycled within one year of removal from the grave or niche.

**Target 4.6b:** Yes

# Equipment Maintenance Standards

## Scope and Purpose

The purpose of these standards is to promote proper equipment maintenance that is generally consistent throughout all national cemeteries, allows the National Cemetery Administration to fulfill its national shrine commitment, and protects the fiscal and tangible resources entrusted to its care.

Equipment maintenance standards include actions that are part of both general and preventive maintenance for all cemetery equipment. Each standard is supported by measures that are used to gauge success at meeting the established standards.

## General

In general, preventive and general maintenance for all cemetery equipment will be performed according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

### 1. Cemetery Equipment Maintenance Program

Standard 1.1: All equipment maintenance activities and schedules are included in a current [Cemetery Equipment Maintenance Program](#).

Measure 1.1: The percent of national cemeteries that have a [Cemetery Equipment Maintenance Program](#) that contains all equipment maintenance activities and schedules.

Target 1.1: 100%

### 2. Records and Documentation

Standard 2.1: Maintenance and service costs and program records are current and accurate.

Requirement 2.1: Current and accurate maintenance and service costs and program records are maintained in the [current inventory and maintenance system](#).

Target 2.1: Yes

Standard 2.2: Equipment documentation is current.

Requirement 2.2: Manufacturers' manuals, operating instructions, titles (if applicable), etc., are current and accessible for each piece of equipment.

Target 2.2: Yes

**Standard 2.3:** Equipment inspections and preparations are conducted according to manufacturers' recommendations prior to each use or operation.

**Measure 2.3:** The percent of operator/preventive maintenance and checklist activities as prescribed by manufacturers' that are completed and recorded daily.

**Target 2.3:** 100%

### **3. Condition of Equipment and Tools**

**Standard 3.1:** Tools are available, properly maintained, and secure.

**Requirement 3.1a:** Tools are stored in a secure location when not in use.

**Target 3.1a:** Yes



**Requirement 3.1b:** Tools are cleaned and stored in the proper location at the end of each workday.

**Target 3.1b:** Yes



**Standard 3.2:** Equipment is functional, in good condition, and visibly marked as national cemetery or Federal property.

**Measure 3.2a:** The percent of cemetery equipment and vehicles that present a clean and neat appearance based upon use.

**Target 3.2a:** 100%

**Measure 3.2b:** The percent of [non expendable cemetery equipment](#) and vehicles that are visibly marked with an [inventory control number](#).

**Target: 3.2b:** 100%

**Measure 3.2c: The percent of cemetery-owned vehicles that are marked with the national cemetery name and/or “Federal Property.”**

**Target 3.2c: 100%**



**Measure 3.2d: The percent of GSA leased vehicles that are marked with a magnetic sign showing the national cemetery name and/or “Federal Property.”**

**Target 3.2d: 100%**



**Measure 3.2e: The percent of non functional equipment that is identified and the appropriate paperwork for turn in is submitted within 90 days of identification.**

**Target 3.2e: 100%**

**Requirement 3.2f: Personnel performing repairs on cemetery equipment are qualified and classified to do that work.**

**Target 3.2f: Yes**

## OTHER STANDARDS

### 1. Facilities

**Standard 1.1:** Restrooms are clean, functional, sanitary, and appropriately supplied (e.g., soap, paper towels/hand-dryer, and toilet paper) and are accessible.

**Measure 1.1a:** The percent of all cemetery restrooms that are inspected daily and determined to be clean and supplied in accordance with a Restroom Checklist.

**Target 1.1a:** 100%



**Measure 1.1b:** The percent of national cemeteries that have a restroom that meets Accessibility Standards

**Target 1.1b:** 90%

**Standard 1.2:** [Buildings](#) and [structures](#) are well-maintained and are acceptable for their functional use.

**Measure 1.2:** The percent of cemetery [structures](#) that are assessed as [acceptable for their function](#) based on the current Building/Structure Score Sheets of the [Facilities Condition Assessment](#).

**Target 1.2:** 90%



**Standard 1.3:** Roads, parking lots, curbs, walks, paths, entry features, and perimeter walls/fences are well-maintained and are acceptable for their functional use.

**Measure 1.3a:** The percentage of access features (roads, parking lots, curbs, walks, paths, entry features, and perimeter walls/fences) that are assessed as [acceptable for their function](#) based on the current Site Score Sheet of the [Facilities Condition Assessment](#).

**Target 1.3a:** 80%



**Measure 1.3b:** The percent of national cemeteries where marked parking spaces are provided that meet accessibility requirements in their public and employee parking lots or areas.

**Target 1.3b:** 100%



**Standard 1.4:** Signage is convenient and helpful.

**Measure 1.4a:** The percent of respondents to the annual [Survey of Satisfaction with National Cemeteries](#) who agree or strongly agree that the signage is sufficient to assist visitors.

**Target 1.4a:** 88%



**Requirement 1.4b:** Cemetery signage is rated [as acceptable for function](#) (clean, legible, accurate, and in good repair) based on the current Site Score Sheet of the [Facilities Condition Assessment](#).

**Target 1.4b:** Yes



**Measure 1.4c:** The percent of national cemeteries that have the hours during the cemetery is open to visitors posted in a visually prominent location.

**Target 1.4c:** 100%

**Standard 1.5:** Approved [water features](#) are functional and maintained according to their intended purpose.

**Requirement 1.5:** [Water features](#) (ponds, lakes, fountains, natural or man-made) are rated acceptable for their function based on the current Site Score Sheet of the [Facilities Condition Assessment](#)

**Target 1.5:** Yes



## **2. Personnel**

**Standard 2.1: Cemetery staff wears appropriate attire for the location and task being performed.**

**Measure 2. 1: The percent of cemetery staff required to wear a uniform who are in compliance with NCA's Directive and Handbook 3010.2, Uniform and Special Clothing for National Cemetery Employees.**

**Target 2.1: 100%**

## **3. Safety**

**Standard 3.1: Necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety measures will be adhered to at all times.**

**Requirement 3.1a: Personnel wear the appropriate PPE for assigned tasks.**

**Target 3.1a: Yes**

**Measure 3.1b: The number of accidents that occur as a result of improper use or lack of using PPE or safety measures during cemetery operations.**

**Target 3.1b: 0 accidents.**

**Standard 3.2: Grounds are maintained in a manner that avoids safety hazards for visitors and staff.**

**Measure 3.2a: The percent of safety hazards (holes, pests, hazardous trees and branches, sprinkler heads, etc.) that are identified and corrective action initiated within the same workday.**

**Target 3.2a: 100%**

**Measure 3.2b: The number of accidents or reported injury to visitors or cemetery staff due to safety hazards.**

**Target 3.2b: 0 accidents**

**Standard 3.3: Cemetery facilities and infrastructures are maintained to avoid safety hazards for visitors and staff.**

**Requirement 3.3a: Roads, sidewalks, paths and parking lots open to the public or for cemetery operations during adverse conditions are safe and accessible (e.g., clear of ice and snow or storm debris).**

**Target: 3.3a: Yes**

**Measure 3.3b: The number of accidents or injuries reported due to unsafe conditions in the cemetery as a result of poor maintenance of facilities and infrastructures.**

**Target 3.3.b: 0 accidents or injuries**

## GLOSSARY

### **Acceptable For Their Function:**

- When applied to buildings and structures (OS-1.2), a rating of acceptable for their function consists of an overall score of “C” or higher and no critical category receiving a score of “D” or “F”. The percentage of cemetery buildings and structures that are assessed as acceptable is derived by dividing the total acceptable buildings and structures by the total buildings and structures.
- When applied to Access Systems (OS-1.3a) (roads, curbs, sidewalks, bridges and overpasses, and parking lots), a rating of acceptable for their function consists of an overall score of “C” or higher. The percentage of Access Systems (roads, curbs, sidewalks, bridges and overpasses, and parking lots) rated as acceptable for measure OS-1.3a is derived by dividing the total number acceptable Access Systems by the number five (the total number of Access Systems).
- When applied to Signs (OS-1.4b) and Water Features (OS-1.5) a rating of acceptable for their function consists of an overall score of “C”.

**Adequate Inventory:** When applied to outer burial receptacles, the number of outer burial receptacles is consistently sufficient for the forecasted burial needs of the cemetery. Emergency orders are avoided.

**Bare Area:** An area within established turf where grass seed has not germinated.

**BOSS:** Burial Operations Support System

**Building:** a man-made structure that is heated or cooled and/or enclosed within a roof and within exterior walls providing shelter and support of individuals and/or real property. A building is usually a completely enclosed, weather-tight structure.

**Cemetery Equipment Maintenance Program:** A written schedule which identifies the manufacturers recommended maintenance activities and services for each vehicle and piece of equipment.

**Cemetery Grounds Management Plan:** A maintenance plan developed by each national cemetery, which identifies required maintenance tasks and schedules for all grounds activities.

**Current Inventory and Maintenance System:** Inventory for cemetery equipment is currently maintained on the Automated Engineering Management System/Medical Equipment Reporting System (AEMS/MERS), and a cemetery system of electronic or manual records.

**Disciplined Evolution:** The visual impression of an active burial section where there is evidence of several activities in progress. These include, completed burials, turf established, headstones/markers set on gravesites, new burials, and new gravesites that are raked and prepared for turf establishment and headstone/marker placement.

**Facility Condition Assessment:** A tool identifying the overall infrastructure condition for buildings, structures and overall site at all national cemeteries. The tool consists of a one-page assessment for each building and structure, and a one-page assessment for the overall site.

**Generally Free of Bare Areas:** The presence of bare ground is very widely scattered and visually insignificant when the total expanse of the cemetery turfgrass is observed. They in no way distract from the visual attractiveness of the landscape.

**Generally Weed Free:** Population of weeds is very widely scattered and visually insignificant when the total expanse of the cemetery turfgrass is observed. They in no way distract from the visual attractiveness of the landscape .

**Gravesite Layout Plan:** A plan depicting burial sections with individual gravesites showing all pertinent spatial information necessary to accurately establish the layout of the burial sections, and to precisely locate specific gravesites. The plan identifies benchmarks and survey reference points for registering the grid of gravesite layout control markers. The plan shows the varying sizes and shapes of the burial sections and the visual separation from other features by vegetation, roads, walks, or changes in slope.

**Green (Organic) Waste:** Small pruning from hedges and trees, leaves, bark, straw, flowers, plants, grass cuttings, and garden weeds.

**Historical Headstones, Markers, and Niche Covers:** Headstones, markers, and niche covers installed 50 or more years ago.

**Historic Significance:** A combination of age, material, inscriptions, uniqueness of design, artist, etc., which contributes to the historical integrity of a monument, headstone, or marker within a cemetery.

**Inventory Control Number:** An NXRN number and/or an Automated Management System/Medical Equipment Reporting System (AEMS/MERS) number issued by the servicing station for inventory control.

**Non-Expendable Cemetery Equipment:** Equipment that has an acquisition cost of \$300 or more; and a life expectancy of two years or more or is of a sensitive nature which requires accountability regardless of cost, life expectancy, or maintenance requirements.

**Objectionable Accumulations:** The presence of environmental deposits, mold, mildew, moss, algae, lichen, grass clippings, grass marks, tire marks and scuffs, and accumulations of dried bird droppings, etc. on headstones, markers, and niche covers.

**Planting Bed:** A defined area of non-turf type planting material. The perimeter is outlined and the bed is filled with ground cover and/or other non-turf plant material.

**Solid Waste Recycling Program:** A program developed at the cemetery in compliance with local, state and federal regulations to collect and separate solid waste to maximize pollution prevention techniques, i.e., paper, glass bottles, jars, aluminum and steel cans, tires, batteries, cardboard, plumbing fixtures, fence material, lumber, insulation, siding, paneling, flooring, carpet and pads, plastic sheeting and plastic laminate, piping and wiring.

**Spoils Area:** A holding area for compost and soil removed from gravesites.

**Structure:** A structure is a man-made asset that does not fall under the building definition. Common structures are committal service shelters, three sided storage enclosures, pump house, underground pump vault, etc. Structures are usually open to the weather.

**Sunken Grave:** Any grave where the grade of the gravesite is not level and does not blend with the grade level of adjacent gravesites. The settlement presents an unsatisfactory appearance, and/or a maintenance or safety situation.

**Survey of Satisfaction with National Cemeteries:** An annual survey conducted by NCA to determine the level of family and funeral director satisfaction with staff, service and appearance of national cemeteries.

**Unaccompanied Veteran:** A veteran whose next of kin is not known or whose burial arrangements have been made by the public administrator, a VA Medical Center, or an Anatomy Board.

**Visually Prominent Area:** This refers to areas within a national cemetery that attract notice due to what is in the area (for example, a cemetery's entrance way, assembly area, interment areas, public information building, committal service shelter(s), visitor entrance to the administration building, lodges and other buildings in prominent locations, and/or memorial path) or topography which makes the area visually prominent. While all parts of a national cemetery are national shrine areas, those that are visually prominent often provide families and visitors with their first impression of the cemetery.

**Water Feature:** Landscape design using water decoratively or functionally, i.e., fountains, pools, natural or man-made ponds, waterfalls and/or lakes.