

Bellville Cemetery Rules and Regulations
Bellville, Ohio
(Revised February 8, 2026)

The Trustees, Utility Dept and Clerk of the Bellville Cemetery have developed the following regulations and information. Please help us maintain the Bellville Cemetery as a beautiful place of rest for our loved ones and a quiet sanctuary to remember our personal and community history.

For questions or concerns: stop by Village Hall at 142 Park Place during normal business hours, email us at cemeteryclerk@bellvilleohio.net or call us at 419-886-2245 ext 3.

Ohio law empowers cemetery boards to adopt rules and regulations governing the cemetery, its practices and activities, and the practice of the grave owners on cemetery grounds.

It is important to remember that when one purchases cemetery property, they are not purchasing property or gaining property rights. The cemetery always continues to own the property, retain the property rights and can therefore govern its use. A "grave or lot" owner is really purchasing an "interment/burial right", not the property itself. The right of interment/burial does not imply or include normal property rights. Therefore, one cannot make changes to the property without the cemetery's permission.

Copies of the Rules and Regulations for the Bellville Cemetery are provided to every purchaser at the time of purchase. When purchasing "interment/burial rights", the owner agrees to abide by the Rules and Regulations as they exist at the time of purchase and as they may be changed to at any time after the purchase. Rules and Regulations are not grandfathered in. If one purchases an interment/burial right under one set of Rules and Regulations, they are bound to be governed by all subsequent changes to the Rules and Regulations. Current Rules and Regulations are posted at each cemetery entrance or available from the cemetery clerk.

Bellville Cemetery regulates decorations and plantings to maintain the beauty of the cemetery and to ensure its safe and efficient maintenance. Violations that interfere with the appearance, safety and maintenance of the cemetery will be removed and disposed of. Decorations are placed at the owner's risk. Bellville Cemetery is not responsible for any decoration, its maintenance, removal of or damage to due to cemetery maintenance or any other cause, including theft.

If you decorate a grave of a loved one, please obey the rules and keep it neat and tidy. Remember that you have neighbors. Unsightly, oversized or too many decorations take away from another person's experience when visiting.

All pets MUST be on a leash per Ohio Revised Code. Pet owners MUST clean up after their pets. Cemetery staff reserves the right, at its discretion, to request an owner remove their pet from the premises.

Littering is prohibited. Please place all trash and any damaged decorations in the trash receptacles. Please place any sod removed from decorating area or other yard waste and sticks in the blue yard waste bins.

ALL DECORATIONS AND CONTAINERS MUST BE REMOVED FROM GRAVES BY:

March 15th to April 15th

Spring Cleanup

October 15th to November 15th

Fall Cleanup

FROM NOV 15TH-MARCH 15TH: ONLY SADDLE ARRANGEMENTS, CHRISTMAS WREATHS OR GRAVE BLANKETS ALLOWED.

ALL DECORATIONS MUST BE REMOVED FOR SPRING AND FALL CLEANUP, INCLUDING: flags, figurines, concrete/stone solar lights, trinkets, windchimes, hanging baskets and anything not attached to the headstone or base.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS:

ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS alone or in plastic floral cones are NOT allowed in the ground and are only permitted in the saddle arrangement on the headstone and in vases permanently attached to the headstone. Artificial flowers in saddles or vases may remain in place during cemetery clean up times in the Spring and Fall. BUT They will be removed by cemetery staff if they become unsightly, damaged or if they come loose from the headstone without an ID tag.

SADDLES:

All saddles are recommended to have an identification tag attached with a contact name, phone number and name of the deceased's headstone it is placed on.

Saddles, attached to the headstone, may be in place all year long **EXCEPT** when they become damaged and unsightly. Then it will be removed by cemetery staff.

If a saddle falls off a monument due to wear and tear or weather, cemetery staff cannot reasonably discern who the owner is. Therefore, if there is no identification tag attached, it will be disposed of.

LOCATION: All plantings and decorations must be placed at the head of the grave, no more than 16" from the monument on the name engraved side of the monument. The planting area must be maintained by the lot owner/next of kin. Nothing is allowed on the sides or in the back of the headstone. Do not remove sod from the sides or back of the headstone. Plantings that are overgrown, wilting, unsightly or outside the allowed area will be removed.

NO GLASS OF ANY KIND: containers or decorations, including trinkets, figurines, candles and vigil lights

NO PLASTIC SOLAR LIGHTS: solar lights in stone or concrete allowed on headstone base or in decorating area.

NO DECORATING SPACE FILLERS MADE OF BRICKS, CINDERS, TILE, STONE, MARBLE, TERRA-COTTA, CONCRETE, GRAVEL, CERAMICS OR WOOD ARE ALLOWED. ONLY FINE MULCH ALLOWED. NO WIRES OR TRELLIS.

NO RIGID PERMANENT BORDERS ALLOWED. This includes concrete, brick, plastic, wood and any type of fencing.

NO signs, flags or messages that are political, profane, offensive or controversial are permitted. No advertising or soliciting. Only 2 small flags allowed per grave, one of which must be an American flag. These flags need removed at fall clean up.

NO weapons of any kind, explosives or ammunition, excluding color guard.

NO food or beverages of any kind to be left on any graves.

Only 4 decorating items allowed per grave. This is for ALL types of decorations including flags, shepherd hooks, trinkets, etc.

Only 1 shepherd hook is permitted for a hanging basket or chimes. The shepherd hook must be within the decorating area at the head of the grave, next to the headstone. Hanging basket contents must be maintained or it will be removed.

NO decorations just sitting in the grass. Decorations, flags and shepherd hooks MUST be in the 16" decorating space in front of the headstone or secured on the footer or headstone.

While we want to be informed if you have decorations stolen, we are not responsible for them. Keep this in mind when spending money on items that may be expensive or have sentimental value.

TREES AND SHRUBS:

Donations may be made toward tree planting and/or cemetery beautification.

Plantings of trees, shrubs, bushes, including roses is prohibited. This includes perennials that grow too large and spread, Examples of but not limited to: ground cover, hostas, daylilies, grasses and clematis or other vines.

No trees are to be removed except by the Utility Dept or a person appointed by the Trustees. Storm damaged or diseased trees will be trimmed and disposed of.

Any planting of flowers, trees or shrubs in violation of the above rules will be removed without notice. Decorations in violation of the above rules or broken/tattered will be removed by the cemetery staff, held for 15 days at the cemetery garage and, if not claimed, will be disposed of.

**** All items disposed of by Bellville Cemetery pursuant to the Rules or per normal Cemetery operations, including plantings and decorations in violation, shall be disposed of in a non-recoverable manner, without liability.**

**** While we understand the need to decorate, guidelines are set and need to be followed to ensure the ease of yard maintenance, safety of our workers and visitors, and for decorations not to interfere with cemetery work and burials.**

MONUMENTS/FOUNDATIONS:

Each monument is to be set following the regulations established by the Cemetery Trustees. It must meet the size regulations and be set on an appropriately sized foundation.

Foundations must be poured by an approved contractor designated by the Bellville Cemetery.

***Maximum size gravestones in the 1979, 2013 and 2020 additions of the Bellville Cemetery:**

Four-inch extensions on each side required.

Single grave: Monument – 36 inches x 14 inches

Foundation – 44 inches x 22 inches

Double Grave: Monument – 72 inches x 14 inches

Foundation – 80 inches x 22 inches

***Maximum size of gravestones in the older additions of the Bellville Cemetery:**

NO extensions required but are recommended to prevent headstone tilting.

Single Grave: Monument – 44 inches x 22 inches

Foundation -- 44 inches x 22 inches

Double Grave: Monument -- 80 inches x 22 inches

Foundation -- 80 inches x 22 inches

Maximum height of monument in all sections of the cemetery will not exceed 43 1½ inches from top of foundation to top of monument

- Monuments in Baby section in 1955 and 2020 additions: 10 in x 20 in or 12in x 24in
- All monuments are to be placed at head of graves. No exceptions.
- Foundations are to be installed only by a contractor who is approved by the Bellville Cemetery Sexton.
- Foundations are poured twice a year in the Spring and Fall. No exceptions.

• To be eligible for monument placement, foundation orders must be received from the Monument Company by the following dates:

• APRIL 1ST FOR SPRING POURING

• SEPTEMBER 1ST FOR FALL POURING

Flush or Grass markers are permitted at the head of grave. Maximum size 2 feet x 1 foot. No ground decorations permitted if flush marker is in the decoration space of the upright headstone.

****ALL LOTS MUST BE PAID IN FULL FOR BEFORE MONUMENTS CAN BE PLACED.**

Burials

- All transfers of gravesites must go through the clerk of the cemetery to be valid.
 - Number of burials per full burial gravesite: 1 full burial, or 1 full burial and 1 cremation, or a maximum of three cremations.
- Number of burials per cremation gravesite: Two cremation burials.
- **For full burials:** Embalming is not required and a specific type of casket is not required. But a vault is required for full burial.
- **For cremations:** Urns must be non-biodegradable. If ashes are in a plastic bag, wood box or plastic box, then an urn vault is required. No urn vault is required with stone/marble/metal urns.
- **The sprinkling of ashes over cemetery property is prohibited. Any sprinkled ashes found on cemetery property will be removed.**
- **No baby burials at foot of graves in 1979, 2013 or 2020 additions.**
- **Cemetery MUST receive burial request information 48 hours in advance of burial.**
- **The Funeral Home MUST notify the cemetery with burial information by Friday at 12p for a burial to occur before 12pm on Monday.**
- **Funeral Home MUST contact the cemetery to schedule a burial date/time PRIOR to releasing the obituary. Cemetery reserves the right to deny a burial date/time due to burial conflicts or maintenance issues.**

For concerned family members regarding a grave that is still bare: The cemetery staff will level and seed graves at their discretion. Generally, graves need leveled with extra topsoil multiple times due to settling. This process may take up to 6 months. Seeding the graves occurs after the grave has settled and the cemetery determines when a grave is ready and the weather is appropriate. The cemetery doesn't seed during the cold months. Putting down grass seed and straw usually occurs in May/June. For example: If a burial occurred last July, the grave wouldn't be fully settled until possibly December. Seeding would happen in late spring, almost a year since the burial occurred. We get many calls from unhappy family members because a grave is still bare. Please be aware: the delay is not for lack of care but rather for providing proper care.

All visitors coming to the Bellville Cemetery are encouraged to stay on the driveways. Visitors who depart from the driveways assume all risks, including those associated with but not limited to: uneven or sunken ground, holes, or unsteady/falling monuments. Bellville Cemetery is not liable for any injury or damage to anyone who leaves the driveways or makes contact with monuments by leaning against, sitting on or climbing on them.

Please be courteous of other visitors. When walking, please step into the grass to let vehicles go by. Drivers, don't speed through the cemetery and watch out for walkers.

In the event there is a dispute between interested parties with respect to an interment, disinterment, cremation, memorial or other matter, Bellville Cemetery may refuse to take any action with respect to the matter in dispute, without liability, until the matter has been fully and finally resolved between the parties. Bellville Cemetery will not mediate, arbitrate or otherwise resolve any dispute in which the cemetery's interests are not directly involved.

The Village of Bellville and Bellville Cemetery shall not be liable for any loss, damage, or delay due to causes beyond its reasonable control including, but not limited to acts of God, weather, common enemies, mischief makers, thieves, vandals, explosions, wars, accidents, insurrections, riots or order of any military or civil authority. This includes any damage to headstones, monuments, vaults, foundations and decorations due to ordinary cemetery work including use of mowers, tractors, weed eaters and other equipment as well as trees, vandalism, weather or natural causes.

These rules may be revised without notice. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping our cemetery beautiful, safe and well-maintained.

FOR QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS: Stop by our office at Village Hall during normal business hours, email us at cemeteryclerk@bellvilleohio.net or call us at 419-886-2245 ext 3 if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Bellville Cemetery Board

Douglas Keppler, Chair

Dawn Blauser

Becky McKinley