

Cemeteries: Maintenance, Rules & Regulations and Best Practices

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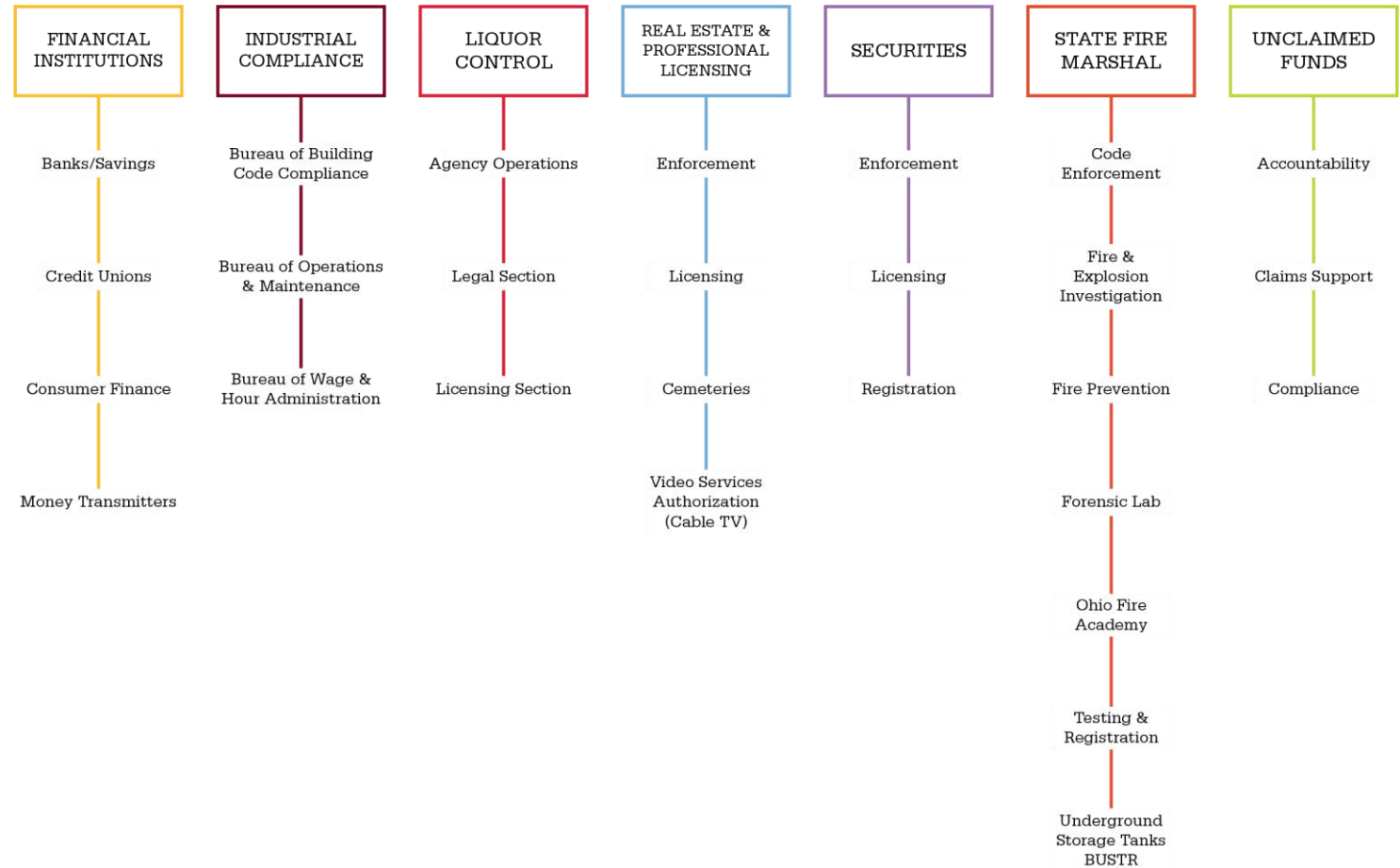
Division of Real Estate & Professional Licensing

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The Ohio Department of Commerce is focused on equipping businesses and protecting consumers.

Commerce has seven Divisions including Real Estate and Professional Licensing

Our goal is to keep Ohioans safe, sound and secure.



Cemetery Registration

No person, church, religious society, established fraternal organization, or political subdivision of the state shall own, operate, or maintain a cemetery unless it is registered with the Ohio Division of Real Estate and Professional Licensing.

Family cemeteries, and a cemetery in which no interments have occurred in the last 25 years, are exempt.

Cemetery Registration

There are 4,117 cemeteries registered in Ohio and 2,021 Operators

- 3,016 CGR
- 718 CBR
- 383 CRC

Ohio Cemetery Dispute Resolution Commission

Nine member commission that assists in resolving complaints against registered cemeteries using informal techniques of mediation.

2015 – 29 complaints, 14 audits

2016 – 28 complaints, 8 audits

ORC Chapter 4767

Mt. Moriah Cemetery

- Owned and operated by the Union Township Board of Trustees in Clermont County, Ohio.
- The cemetery is comprised of 52 acres with five full-time employees and two part-time employees.
- The cemetery performs, on average, around 200 interments/burials a year.



The main areas of focus when maintaining a cemetery

- Maintenance to the grounds of your cemetery
- Burials
- Monuments and their installation
- Decoration Policies
- Cemetery Rules & Regulations
- Cemetery Records
- Compliance with the law

Grounds Maintenance

Your strategy and care of the cemetery grounds can be one of the most important things that you do. It is often the only thing that the general public sees and notices about you



Grounds Maintenance

Have you considered ways to improve the turf areas within your cemetery?

1. Fertilization
2. Herbicides
3. Grass seed blends

A healthy turf area is easier to maintain than one full of weeds. It will also look better throughout the year and be more durable during the winter.



Burials

What are your standards for burials?

- Opening and closing
- Criteria for ground cover application
- Set-up for funerals – including graveside vs. roadside
- Do you supply tents/chairs for services or will the funeral home make arrangements?

Burials

Maintenance plan for new burials

- How often will you address them?
- When will flowers be removed?
- When will you apply grass seed to them?
- How long after they have settled will you foundation for a headstone?



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Monuments and Installation

Do you have limitations or restrictions on monuments or markers?

Who is responsible for digging and pouring the foundations within the cemetery?



Monuments and Installation

How often each year will foundations be installed?

Do you provide services for straightening,
leveling or repairing headstones?



Decoration Policies

What are permitted decorations?

- Live flowers vs. artificial flowers
- Vases, solar lights, shepherds hooks, edging and more
- Plantings

What will be done with unauthorized decorations?

What areas around the grave can be decorated?

Spring clean-up & policy during mowing season.



Cemetery Rules & Regulations

Your cemetery's rules and regulations are the guidelines (foundation) by which your cemetery should be operated. They should reflect your operation practices as well as the overall appearance of your grounds.

Rules and regulations should be as specific as possible with respect to what is permitted within your cemetery and how it is operated.

Cemetery Rules & Regulations

Hours of Operation

Decoration Policies

Monument restrictions

Who is responsible for damaged monuments



Cemetery Rules & Regulations

Control of interment rights, transfer of rights

Speed limit on the grounds

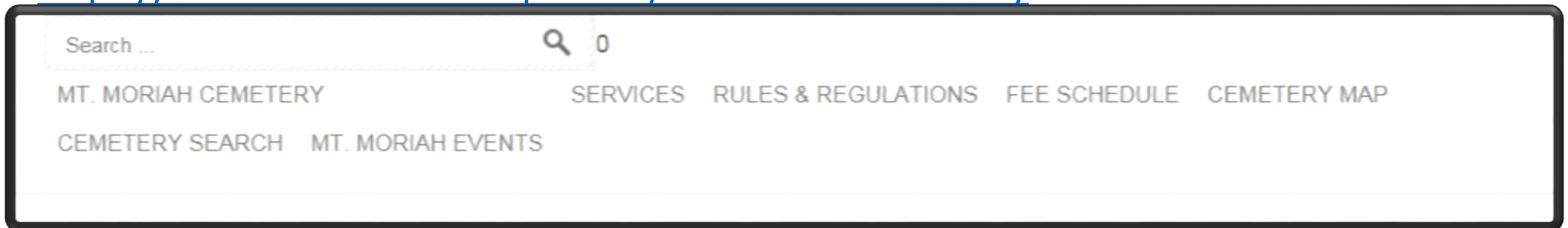
Conduct of patrons visiting the grounds

Cemetery Rules & Regulations

Have you considered posting all of your information pertaining to your cemetery online?

- Fees for services and requirements
- Rules & Regulations
- Maps of your cemetery and its sections

<https://www.union-township.oh.us/mt-moriah-cemetery>

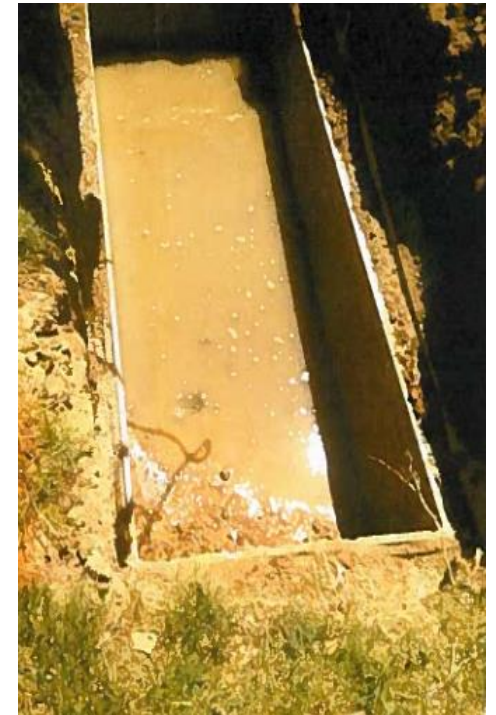


Cemetery Rules & Regulations

Most cemeteries have written policies and procedures that accompany the rules and regulations of their cemetery that pertain to the daily operations.



- Restrictions on days and times of burials
- Procedures for disinterments
- Ground maintenance procedures
- Placement of monuments on graves
- Record retention and lot inquiries



Cemetery Rules & Regulations

When considering updating or modifying your rules and regulations, there is no universal template out there that will work for everyone. Each cemetery is unique in its own operation practices, size and budget.

- Provide notice of any updated rules and regulations
- Implementing/enforcing rules and regulations

Cemetery Records

Have you considered or do you provide forms within your office or online for residents?

- Lot transfers
- Permission to bury
- Heirs release of interest in plot
- Lot orientation diagram

What steps have you taken to ensure your records are accurate and secure for future generations?

Compliance with the law

Minimum Maintenance Guidelines

- Cut grass once per month during the growing season
- Trim around markers/monuments three times a year
- Sod or seed graves as necessary within one year of interment
- Remove trash and funeral flowers once a month (artificial flowers once a year)

Compliance with the law

Minimum Maintenance Guidelines

- All graves or lots should be identified by a map that is stored in the office of the cemetery.
- Effective March 19, 2015, newly developed lots should be pinned and owners' names should be recorded so that family lot positions are clearly identifiable and able to be located.

Compliance with the law

Minimum Maintenance Guidelines - Electronic or paper cemetery records

- Should be maintained in the cemetery's office.
- Paper copies of records should be maintained in a fireproof container.
- If possible, duplicate copies of all records should be maintained off-site.
- It is permissible to maintain records in an electronic format so long as the electronic copies are true copies of all the original documents.

Compliance with the law

ORC Chapter 517 – Townships

ORC Chapter 759 – Municipalities/Villages/Unions

ORC Chapter 1721 – Cemetery Associations

<http://codes.ohio.gov/>

Questions?

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