



WARRINGTON

Borough Council

**Memorial Inspections
Health & Safety in Cemeteries**

Procedures for memorial Inspections:

The Law: Health & Safety at Work 1974 and 1999 covers:

- Duty of each person to look after himself
- Health, Safety and welfare of the person at work
- Protecting persons against risk and Health & Safety in connection with the activities of people at work.

Local Authorities Cemetery Order 1977 & 1999:

- It states that it is an offence to wilfully damage a memorial, flowers or plants.
- In the section; General Powers of Management, it states 'all such things as they consider necessary or desirable for the proper management, regulation and control of a cemetery,
- say that they are **NOT** thereby authorised to take action in relation to:
- Chapels or sections on consecrated ground. (Inspecting requires a faculty)
- Any Vault, tombstone or other memorial, other than action which is necessary to remove a danger, which arises by reason of the condition of the vault, tombstone or other memorial, itself.

War graves, listed monuments and memorials on consecrated ground have restrictions.

Ministry of Justice Guidance (MoJ): (Safety in Burial Grounds)

‘Operatives should adopt a risk-based and proportionate approach to managing of memorials’. It should have ‘a sensible approach to all risks associated with the burial environment’. ‘Memorials are one of the number of low level risks and need careful sensitive management’.

MoJ guidelines:

- We have a DUTY OF CARE to the public and every one using the Cemetery.
- A Cemetery is a Place of Burial and a Place of Remembrance.
- We must show Respect and Reverence for the grave and memorial.
- The memorial is not just a marker, but a place to grieve and remember others buried elsewhere. We must treat memorials with sympathy and respect.
- The Cemetery is a public place and safety is very important.

ICCM – Management of memorials

Training

Risk: All inspections are done on a risk-based and proportionate approach. Before inspections commence the memorials officer/Cemetery Foreman/senior officer shall select the area for memorial inspection by assessment of **Priority Zones**.

- Vulnerable areas within the cemetery shall be inspected as priority; entrances, pathways, areas regularly used seats, water points, bins and toilets, new burial areas, around chapel, parking areas, where children may play, and memorials of well known people or have architectural or aesthetic qualities.
- The most vulnerable areas are either side of roads, pathways within cemeteries. Approximately 10m onto the burial ground.
- The inspector shall be given the plot to inspect. WBC inspects a full section at a time.

Inspections:

Each individual member of staff inspecting memorials should always assess the risk of the area that they are working,

Protective/Preventative measures to be taken:

- Full training and instruction to all personnel involved.
- Full implementation of safe working practice.
- Appropriate protective clothing.
- Awareness and monitoring of the presence of others and equipment.
- Adhere to or attend all relevant training.

Do not walk across any memorial. Look out for iron and plastic fencing and other hazards such as brambles, holes, needles and glass etc...

Memorial Safety Risk Assessment Form

Cemetery					
Section/Area					

	Memorials		Access/Traffic		Environment
1	Monolith memorials	1	Inaccessible/ No visitation, overgrown	1	New lawn section, well maintained
2	NAMM Fix Memorials or below 500mm	2	Away from roads/paths, seldom visited	2	New lawn section, average maintenance
3	Lawn memorials - back to back	3	Accessible, reasonable numbers	3	Older lawn section
4	Lawn memorials – not back to back	4	Signs of misuse in area	4	Older section no kerbs
5	Kerbed Memorials under 1m	5	Accessible, well visited	5	Older section with kerbs
6	Memorials from 1m to 1.5m	6	Adjacent to well used roads and footpaths	6	Old section, kerbs, vaults – reasonable maintenance
7	Old jointed memorials over 1.5m	7	Very well visited ongoing burials in section	7	Old section, kerbs, vaults poor maintenance

Activity rating number: (memorial+access/traffic+environment)

Additional comments:

Action required to be taken:

Date of assessment:	Validated by (Print) Signed Date
Assessors signature:	
Print name	

Scoresheet - please see overleaf

Memorial Safety Assessment

SCORE SHEET

<u>Note:</u>	A memorial should only be considered as unsafe if it moves and will continue to move until it falls to the floor under an initial firm but reasonable force (suggest a force approximating 35kg)
3 - 10	Low risk – Visual inspection only. Place notice only if a memorial is found to be unstable unless the memorial is considered an immediate danger and could cause a serious injury, should this be the case then alternative making safe methods should be considered and implemented. If individual memorials are considered a higher risk then these should be inspected using a visual followed by a hand test.
11 - 16	Medium Risk - The area have an initial visual and hand test on every memorial using experienced/trained staff. Some memorials may need specialist inspections. A full inspection on a minimum frequency of 5 years is recommended. Any memorials showing early signs of instability should be monitored every 12 months. Memorials that are found to be unstable should be have notices placed and should be set in the ground, cordoned off, temporarily supported, repaired, or laid down immediately. All action must be based on the likelihood of injury and should be proportionate to a medium risk area.
17+	High Risk - Area will need a visual and hand test on every memorial using experienced/trained staff. Some memorials may need specialist inspections. Memorials will require full inspection on a minimum frequency of 5 years. Any memorials showing early signs of instability should be monitored every 12 months. Memorials that are found to be unstable should be have notices placed and should be cordoned off and should be set in the ground, cordoned off, temporarily supported, repaired, or laid down immediately. All action must be based on the likelihood of injury and should be proportionate to a high risk area.

Excavation of Grave Spaces.

Prior to commencing excavation process on grave spaces, the memorials in the immediate area must be inspected as per risk assessment & burial training. Reporting their findings to the designated officers and record their findings and action taken.

DO NOT TEST a **NEW MEMORIAL** for at **LEAST 28 DAYS** from placement

Inspection Process:

- Visual inspection of memorial (grave name, type, condition, ground condition, joint condition)
- Record findings on inspection sheet
- Measure and record size of memorial
- Hand test the memorial and record findings (as per training provided)
- Topple tester if required. (Only to be used under extreme circumstances with officers permission, as per training provided)
- If memorial is unsafe/weathered take a photo and record the number
- If the memorial is leaning, record it, measure and record lean if required (Lean machine)

MoJ/BS 8415 (British Standards) recommend that a hand device (Topple tester) may not to be used as a permanent inspection device for memorial inspecting and should not exceed 20kg and not used under 625mm/2`).

When using the device you must place it centrally on the memorial to avoid damaging the memorial. Never use the device on statue, carved work, raised letters and uneven surfaces.

ASSESSING TALL OR LARGE MONUMENTS Over 1800mm (6`0”) or 4 tons

- Look at the memorial as a whole to assess any obvious problems before getting to close
- Inspect the condition of the materials used to construct the memorial. Only if all the structural parts are in good condition is it reasonable to continue.
- Check all joints and see that they are pointed and in good condition.
- Measure the level this will assess any sinkage. Accuracy is vitally important as even small movements change a monument from safe to potentially dangerous. (Different levels to be tested on the memorial).If the memorial has a Cross, angel or other feature at a height above head level, which may be unsafe, then a safe platform must be erected to continue the assessment of the memorial. (We do not work of a ladder for personal safety reasons).
- A photographic record of the memorial as a whole must be made, including the inscription and any defects.

Before inspections commence on larger memorials the Cemetery Foreman/senior officer shall decide if a structural survey is required.

Recording of inspections:

All inspections shall be recorded electronically or on paper record, recording the following:

- Section & grave number
- Grave name
- Memorial, Memorial type, Memorial size (height) using key provided
- Ground condition
- Joint check (visual check of all joints)
- Rock test (hand test inspection)
- Condition of memorial
- Action required/Comment (This section records any problem with the memorial, the make safe method and photograph number)
- Priority 1,2,3 (1 Immediate danger, 2 Re-inspect in 12 months, 3 re-inspect in 5 years)
- Inspection date
- Inspector signature
- Signature Required & date once inspection complete
- Checked by signature & date required once officer has checked sheet after completion.

Making safe of memorials:

Under Health & safety legislation you must be seen to be taking reasonable precautions to protect the health & safety within the cemetery

As far as inspecting memorials or standing memorials back up, carry out an assessment on each memorial. If the memorial is unsafe, minimise the risk. **A memorial should be safe or guarded when you leave.**

Great care must be taken when laying flat, fencing off, placing rope, bands, hazard tape and signs on a memorial ensuring the inscriptions are not covered. The protection of the memorial is paramount at all times.

- If the memorial is only likely to fall backwards against another memorial (therefore the only risk is a finger trap) then it would be proportional to the risk to simply place a notice on or near the memorial in question.
- If there is a danger of the memorial falling forward or the beam needs repairing or is inadequate, if there isn't a memorial behind the unstable memorial then you need to assess the size and level of instability of the memorial, if you consider it large enough to cause serious injury and there is a high risk of it falling then you may need to consider staking it off with banding, laying flat, sinking in in front of the beam or securing it in some other way.
- When staking a memorial off the memorial must be staked off from behind. Only if is impractical and no other make safe method can be used can the stake be placed in front of the memorial. TAKE CARE WHEN USING A POST DRIVER not to damage a memorial and make sure the post is the correct size for the memorial and standing upright.
- Inspecting memorials over 4' (church jobs etc...), failing they must be sunk in (using training provided and the gantry for lifting) at the time of finding unsafe. If it is impractical to complete the required make safe at the time of inspection, the memorial **MUST** be cordoned off or laid flat with a notice placed on it until required works of make safe can be completed.

- Care must be taken when Banding/Taping/cordoning/fencing off a memorial or a full section/plot of the cemetery. Coloured tapes etc... This may draw children to investigate and climb the memorial.
- On Full Size Memorials, if kerbs or posts become detached (Diss) from the memorial, lay them within the grave space.
- Temporary make safe, using certified products with memorials situated on a beam. Procedure through training provided. (We have used this many years ago, can't be used in freezing weather and is only a temporary make safe, you need a clean dry area to fix, if the beam is inadequate, normally older beams, it can not be used).
- Re-fixing the memorial to British standard 8415. (BRAMM NVQ qualified member of staff to carry out this procedure or a stonemason)

Staking off memorials is temporary, checks must be made to ensure the stake and rope/banding is not removed, therefore additional checks are required. If we do not have a living owner recorded and can see the grave is visited, we stake the memorial off and leave a notice, if we do not have contact after a period of time the memorial is sunk in.

We sink in any memorial on re-inspection that has been laid flat or staked off on the previous inspections, including lawn memorials, always take a photo before sinking if and inscription is lost.

Equipment:

- Plot location map
- Pencils/pens
- Tape measure
- Gloves rubber/material
- Steel toe cap shoes/boots
- Electronic/paper recording sheets
- **Lean finder – used to establish change in leaning memorials**
- Clipboard
- Camera
- Unsafe memorial notices
- Gantry
- Gantry straps
- Posts
- Hazard tape/Rope/fencing

WBC has permanent Health & Safety notices at the entrance to all cemeteries, informing users of memorial inspections. Further notices are to be placed on each section as memorial inspections commence and during inspections. Publication in local press as and when required.

Dealing with failure:

It is the owner's responsibility to keep the memorial in good condition and not become a danger. If the owner can not be contacted it becomes the cemetery's responsibility to make it safe. If failure does not have to be met immediately an effort must be made to contact the grave owner of the memorial. If the memorial is visited **YOU** must inform the officer responsible for contacting the grave owner/family that the memorial is unsafe to ensure immediate contact can be made. The officer shall inform the grave owner by letter that the memorial is unsafe and that the memorial needs attention.

WBC Inspection Keys

Memorial:

Nil – Nothing on grave
HSS – Headstone on soil
HSB – Headstone on a beam
KL – Kerbs set on Landings
KCP – Kerbs with corner posts
KDL – Kerbs set on double landings
KFF – Kerbs set on a full frame foundation
HSK – Headstone with Kerbs
SL – Slab
PL – Plaque
BK – Book
V – Vase
SS – Soldiers Headstone (War Graves)

Memorial Type:

YS – York stone
SS – Sand stone
G – Granite
RG – Rustic Granite
PP G – Part Polished Granite
WM – White Marble
SL – Slate

Details contained in the memorial procedures reflect the content of the procedures at the date it was prepared. However, it is inevitable that over time, the nature of the procedures/guidelines may change. Existing procedures may no longer be required and other procedures/guidelines may be gained.

WBC Inspection Comments Keys

ASI – Already Sunk In

SI – Sink In

LF – Laid Flat

ALF – Already Laid Flat

Diss – Disorganised

?- questioning and action or a comment

P –if a photo is required of a memorial

A date and signature is required on the inspection date

Action date, with the action carried out in the comment box

Completed date and signature

If a memorial has started to deteriorate and losing inscription details photographs are required for records, also required for H & S purposes.

Any Questions