Malmsbury Cemetery Trust
Grave Diggers’ Policy

It is the policy of the Trust that specific requirements must be followed to ensure the successful completion of all grave digging tasks without incident or accident.

A reference in this policy to requirements applying to a grave digger applies to the contractor and the contractor’s employees and sub-contractors, unless the reference is to the “grave digger contractor” in which case the policy refers to the person contracting with the Trust.

Assessment by grave digger

Grave digging can be a hazardous task. All grave sites must first be assessed by the grave digger for potential hazards and appropriate safe procedures used to minimise risk.

Shoring

As a minimum, all graves must have a timber or metal support at the top of the grave to prevent ground collapse. Other shoring may be required to address the assessed hazard.

Digging

The following is required:

- A minimum of two personnel while digging is in progress. At the request of the gravedigger contractor, the Trust may agree to provide a second person, and if so the role of that person is solely to call for emergency assistance if needed.

- The wearing of a safety helmet while working in a grave or beside an operating backhoe.

- Use of a ladder to gain access to, and to get out of a grave.

- Shoring materials used are to be checked before use. Any twisted, broken or split timbers are to be rejected.

- Adjacent memorials are either secured or removed prior to grave digging, as necessary.

- All grave diggers carry a mobile phone or other form of communication.
Presentation

The following is required.

- If there is to be a lowering device, the stand for the lowering device or the lowering device is to be placed on the side boards. There may need to be boards for levelling to prevent the lowering device rocking and to ensure it is horizontal.
- Where ground stability is assessed as being potentially unstable, timber or aluminium shoring must also be installed.
- Any spilled earth around the grave must be shovelled/swept up.
- Any wheel/stabilizer marks are to be filled in to remove any potential trip hazards.
- The grave cover is placed over the grave to reduce the risk of falls. It must be stable, including for any lowering device.

Backfill

- Graves must be backfilled in a method that ensures safety for the public and other users of the cemetery.
- The refilling of graves, including removal of the shoring system, is to be completed without risk of collapse or injury.
- Backfill is completed with care to minimise manual handling strains.
- The grave is mounded up and floral tributes placed on the mound.
- Compaction of the grave site will be completed after the funeral is complete. A mechanical method of compaction is preferred.
- Any surplus excavated earth is removed to the site directed by the Trust representative.

Visitors and mourners

If visitors or mourners are present, the gravedigger must:

- Observe an attitude to visitors and mourners that is respectful of their feelings.
- Not operate machinery or create a disturbance in their close proximity.
- Recognise potential hazards arising from their work and take precautions to protect visitors and mourners.
Grave digger, employees and contractors

1. **Operator qualifications:** The grave digger contractor must make sure that everyone it engages in grave digging is qualified and competent to undertake the work (alternatively, apprentices and unqualified employees are to be closely supervised while on site). Personnel must be:

   - licensed/certificated (where legally required) to operate vehicles and plant on site or to perform certain tasks;
   - trained in the work, authorised by the grave digger contractor to undertake the work, and properly supervised;
   - have safe work procedures available to guide all work done on the Trust site.

2. **Compliance:** The grave digger contractor is responsible for compliance by the gravedigger, contractors and employees with all statutory and Worksafe requirements for health and safety applicable to grave digging.

3. **Personal protective equipment (PPE):** The grave digger contractor must provide basic PPE (safety footwear, safety helmets, hearing protection and eye protection, etc., all to Australian Standards) as assessed as needed by the grave digger contractor for everyone it engages in grave digging.

4. **Safety training:** The grave digger contractor must make sure that everyone it engages in grave digging has all necessary health and safety training and undertakes any training required by the Trust.

5. **First aid:** The grave digger contractor must provide first aid facilities for everyone it engages in grave digging.

6. **OHS policy:** The Trust’s OHS policy applies. The gravedigger must report all incidents and accidents to the Trust.

7. **Insurance:** The gravedigger contractor’s public liability and worker’s compensation insurances must be current and available for inspection if requested.

Adopted: November 2013