

# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

## NATIONAL CEMETERIES: 2009 SATISFACTION SURVEY



**Please read and answer the following question first.**

**Have you visited a national cemetery in the past 12 months?**

- No (STOP. You do not have to complete the rest of this questionnaire, but please return the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.)
- Yes (Continue on to the next question.)

OMB Control Number 2900-0571  
Public Reporting Burden Statement

VA may not conduct, sponsor, or require the respondent to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB Control Number. All responses to this collection are voluntary. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 minutes per response, including the time necessary for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The information collected is intended to be used in making improvements in services within the National Cemetery Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs and for associated administrative purposes. Failure to furnish the requested information will have no adverse effect on any VA benefit to which you may be entitled.

The information you supply will be confidential and protected by the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 522a) and the VA's confidentiality statute (38 U.S.C. 5701) as implemented by 38 CFR 1.526(a) and 38 CFR 1.576(b). Disclosure of information involves releases of statistical data and other non-identifying data for the improvement of services within the National Cemetery Administration and for associated administrative purposes. Please send any comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden to VA Clearance Officer (005G2), 810 Vermont Ave., NW, Washington DC 20420. SEND COMMENTS ONLY. DO NOT SEND THIS FORM OR REQUESTS FOR BENEFITS TO THIS ADDRESS.

### Marking Instructions

**The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete.**

Please read each question carefully and respond by filling in the oval of the response that most closely represents your opinion.

**Correct Mark**



**Incorrect Marks**



- Use pencil or pen. Make heavy dark marks that fill the ovals completely. If you wish to change an answer, erase cleanly (pencil), or put an "X" over the incorrect response (pen).
- Fill in one answer oval for each question unless it tells you to "mark all that apply".
- When you are finished, please place the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and put it in the mail.



**DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA**



**Next-of-Kin:** Respond to the questions on the left column of the page, beginning with Question 1.

**Funeral Directors:** Respond to the questions on the right column of the page, beginning with Question A.

**Questions for Next-of-Kin** ⬇

*Please complete this survey based on your experiences at the national cemetery where your loved one was interred.*

**1. Since the committal service, how many times have you visited the national cemetery where your loved one was interred?**

- 1 - 3
- 4 - 6
- 7 - 9
- 10 or more
- None, I have not visited

**2. Your recently deceased loved one was your...**

- Spouse
- Parent
- Brother/Sister
- Son/Daughter (includes stepchildren)
- Other relative
- Friend

**3. What burial option was chosen for your loved one?**

- In ground (full casket)
- Cremation - in ground
- Cremation - columbarium
- Don't know

**4. How far do you reside from the national cemetery?**

- Less than 15 miles
- 15 to 30 miles
- 30 to 45 miles
- 45 to 60 miles
- 60 to 75 miles
- Over 75 miles

**5. Do the following factors limit the number of times you visit the national cemetery where your loved one is interred? (Please mark Yes or No for each item below.)**

- |   |                       |                       |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|   | <b>Yes</b>            | <b>No</b>             |
| a. Distance to the national cemetery . . .  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Travel time to the national cemetery . . .   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Inconvenient location of the national cemetery (e.g., neighborhood, no direct route) . . . . . | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. My access to transportation (private or public) . . . . .                                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. My health status (e.g., physical limitation or constraints) . . . . .                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. Other (please specify in General Comments, page 8) . . . . .                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**Questions for Funeral Directors** ⬇

**A. Looking at the attached form, please identify the national cemetery with which you most frequently do business and fill in the corresponding number in the spaces below. Please complete this survey based on your experiences at this national cemetery within the past 12 months.**

0	0	0
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5
6	6	6
7	7	7
8	8	8
9	9	9

**B. How far is your funeral home from the national cemetery with which you most frequently do business?**

- Less than 15 miles
- 15 to 30 miles
- 30 to 45 miles
- 45 to 60 miles
- 60 to 75 miles
- Over 75 miles

**C. How long has your funeral home worked with the national cemetery?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 4 years
- 5 to 8 years
- 9 to 12 years
- 13 years or more
- Don't know



**Next-of-Kin:** Respond to the questions on the left column of the page.

**Funeral Directors:** Respond to the questions on the right column of the page.

**Questions for Next-of-Kin** ↓

6. Please identify which cemetery signs you feel need improvements in directing visitors about the following accommodations (e.g., understandable signs, greater number of signs, larger signs)? (Mark all that apply)
- Cemetery hours of operation
  - Kiosks (e.g., gravesite locators)
  - Section markers
  - Committal shelters
  - Floral regulation
  - Restrooms
  - None – current signage is adequate
7. Are you a veteran or a current member of the active military or the reserve?
- Yes       No
8. Prior to your time of need, to what extent were you aware of the benefits related to burial in a national cemetery?
- Completely aware
  - Somewhat aware
  - Unaware (SKIP to Q10)
9. How did you learn of these benefits prior to your time of need? (Mark all that apply)
- Family member/friend
  - Funeral home
  - Military discharge-related materials
  - Other veteran/active duty member
  - VA/NCA pamphlet, brochure, newsletter
  - VA/NCA Web site
  - Veterans Service Organization
  - State/County Veteran Service Officer
  - Other VA organization
  - Local newspaper/television news reports
  - Public events (e.g., parades, exhibits, speeches)
  - Professional/military association meetings or conventions
10. Prior to the time of need, what is the BEST way for the national cemetery to convey information regarding benefits? (Mark only one)
- E-mail
  - VA/NCA Web site
  - Newsletter/flyer
  - Local newspaper/television news reports
  - Public events (e.g., parades, exhibits, speeches)
  - Professional/military association meetings or conventions
  - Other

**Questions for Funeral Directors** ↓

- D. Of the eligible veteran families you serve, approximately what percent choose burial in the national cemetery?
- 1-5 %
  - 5-10%
  - 10-15%
  - 15-25%
  - 25-50%
  - 50-75%
  - 75-100%
- E. How would you characterize the overall communication from the national cemetery to your funeral home?
- Excellent
  - Good
  - Fair
  - Poor
- F. Do you feel that you are well informed by the national cemetery of its policies and procedures?
- Yes, well informed
  - Yes, somewhat well informed
  - No, not well informed
- G. In general, of the following services, which one provides you the MOST information about national cemetery policies and procedures? (Mark only one)
- VA/NCA Web site
  - Local newspaper/television news reports
  - Public events (e.g., parades, exhibits, speeches)
  - Professional associations/conventions/meetings
  - Veterans Service Officers
  - Outreach by cemetery staff
  - Other



**Next-of-Kin:** Respond to the questions on the left column of the page.

**Funeral Directors:** Respond to the questions on the right column of the page.

**Questions for Next-of-Kin** ↓

**17. Overall, how satisfied were you with the committal service at the national cemetery?**

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

**18. Were the headstone, marker, or columbarium niche cover inscription options explained to you?**

- Yes
- No (SKIP TO Q22)
- Not sure/don't know (SKIP TO Q22)

**19. Which of the following inscription options were explained to you? (Mark all that apply)**

- Military service information (e.g., rank, service, valor awards)
- Emblems of belief (e.g., religious symbols)
- Terms of endearment (e.g., beloved father)

**20. Did you feel you had sufficient time to make a decision on the headstone, marker, or columbarium niche cover inscription options?**

- Yes
- No

**21. Who explained headstone, marker, or columbarium niche cover inscription options to you?**

- National cemetery representative ONLY
- Funeral director ONLY
- BOTH the national cemetery representative and the funeral director
- NEITHER the national cemetery representative nor the funeral director

**22. How satisfied were you with the length of time it took for the permanent headstone, marker, or columbarium niche cover to be in place?**

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know/the marker or headstone has not yet arrived

**Questions for Funeral Directors** ↓

**K. Overall, how would you compare the level of service you receive from the national cemetery with the level of service you receive from private cemeteries?**

- Superior to private cemeteries
- Better than private cemeteries
- About the same
- Worse than private cemeteries
- Much worse than private cemeteries
- Don't know/not applicable

**L. Overall, how would you compare the appearance of the national cemetery with the appearance of private cemeteries?**

- Superior to private cemeteries
- Better than private cemeteries
- About the same
- Worse than private cemeteries
- Much worse than private cemeteries
- Don't know/not applicable

**M. To what extent do you understand the eligibility requirements for burial in a national cemetery, including eligibility for reservists and veteran dependents?**

- Understand completely
- Understand somewhat
- Do not understand

**N. How well do you understand the headstone, marker, or columbarium niche cover inscription options available to next of kin?**

- Understand completely
- Understand somewhat
- Do not understand

**O. How easy is the process of scheduling an interment at the national cemetery?**

- Very easy
- Somewhat easy
- Neither easy nor hard
- Somewhat hard
- Very hard







**Next-of-Kin:** Respond to the questions on the left column of the page.  
**Funeral Directors:** Respond to the questions on the right column of the page.

**Questions for Next-of-Kin** ↓

28. After the loss of your loved one ...
- a. Did you need bereavement counseling or support?  
 Yes     No     Don't know
- b. Did you seek bereavement counseling or support?  
 Yes     No
29. Have you contacted VA to find out if you are eligible for VA survivor benefits?  
 Yes     No     Don't know
30. Are you eligible for VA survivor benefits?  
 Yes     No     Don't know
31. If eligible, have you applied for VA survival benefits?  
 Yes     No     Don't know

*(For information on survivor benefits, contact VA 800.827.1000)*

32. Overall, what was the biggest contributing factor to the decision to bury your loved one in a national cemetery? *(Mark only one)*
- Honor the wishes of my loved one
  - Recognition of military service
  - Other family member also buried at national cemetery
  - Location
  - Affordability

**Questions for Funeral Directors** ↓

- U. How easy is it to schedule military honors at the national cemetery?
- Very easy
  - Somewhat easy
  - Neither easy nor hard
  - Somewhat hard
  - Very hard
- V. To what extent is the quality of military honors acceptable?
- Very acceptable
  - Somewhat acceptable
  - Neither acceptable nor unacceptable
  - Somewhat unacceptable
  - Very unacceptable

**Questions for All Participants**

*Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.*

- a. The maintenance of the cemetery grounds is excellent. ....
- b. The upkeep of the headstones, markers, or columbarium niche covers is excellent. ....
- c. The maintenance of other landscape features (e.g., flowers, trees, shrubs) is excellent. ....
- d. The committal shelter used for the service was clean, free of safety hazards, and private. ....
- e. There is adequate handicap accessibility for visitors who need it. ...
- f. The availability of restrooms is suitable to accommodate visitors on busy days. ....

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ Not applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Questions for All Participants** *(continued)*

*Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ Not applicable
g. The cemetery honors all veterans and their service to our nation. ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. There are sufficient signs within the cemetery to assist visitors. ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Parking at the cemetery is adequate to accommodate visitors on most days. ....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. The cemetery's roadways and intersections are safe and easily navigated. ....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. The quality of service received from cemetery staff is excellent. ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. The national cemetery hours of operation meet my needs. ....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. The appearance of my loved one's gravesite/columbaria is excellent. ....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. The information kiosks (i.e., gravesite locators) are helpful to me. ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Public ceremonies and events at the cemetery promote a sense of patriotism and heritage. ....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. The overall appearance of the national cemetery is excellent. ....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. Overall, I am satisfied with my experiences at the national cemetery. ....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
r. I would recommend the cemetery to veteran families during their time of need. ....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
s. I am willing to rely on VA and the National Cemetery Administration to meet the burial needs of veterans in the future. ....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
t. I am willing to rely on VA and the National Cemetery Administration to maintain national cemeteries as national shrines in the future. ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
u. My experiences with the national cemetery exceeded my expectations. ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**General Comments:** *Please use this space to elaborate on any aspect of your experiences at the national cemetery you wish to share with us.*

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your answers are very important to ensure that the services provided by national cemeteries meet your needs and expectations. Please return your questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope.



DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

