

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.)

| | Yes | No |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 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 ↓

11. To what extent were you informed of the details (e.g., length of service, use of committal shelters) related to the committal service prior to attending the service?

- Very informed
- Somewhat informed
- Neither informed nor uninformed
- Somewhat uninformed
- Very uninformed

12. Overall, how satisfied are you with the information you were provided throughout your experiences with the national cemetery?

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

13. At the committal service, did your family have any of the following special needs or requests? (Mark all that apply)

- Visit the gravesite
- View the burial
- Special music
- Special religious practices (e.g., blessing the gravesite)
- Additional seating at the committal service
- Handicapped accommodations
- No, my family did not have any special needs or requests (**SKIP TO Q15**)

14. Was the cemetery able to accommodate these special needs or requests to your satisfaction?

- Yes, completely
- Yes, somewhat
- No, and I understand why
- No, and I did not understand why

15. If your loved one was a veteran, did your family request military funeral honors?

- Yes, and honors were provided
- Yes, but honors were not provided (**SKIP TO Q17**)
- No, did not request military funeral honors (**SKIP TO Q17**)

(If your loved one was NOT a veteran, please SKIP TO Q17)

16. How satisfied were you with the quality of the military funeral honors your loved one received?

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

Questions for Funeral Directors ↓

H. What national cemetery policies or procedures do you feel you could use more information about? (Mark all that apply)

- None, I feel well informed
- Eligibility requirements for burial in a national cemetery
- Scheduling process
- Military funeral honors
- Presidential Memorial Certificates
- Floral policy
- Headstone, marker, or columbarium niche cover inscription options

I. What is the best way for the national cemetery to communicate with your funeral home regarding changes in its policies and procedures? (Mark only one)

- Phone
- Fax
- Letter
- Email
- VA/NCA Web site
- Newsletter or flyer

J. Overall, how satisfied are you with the communication between your funeral home and the national cemetery?

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

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 ↓

23. When the headstone, marker, or columbarium niche cover arrived, was the inscription accurate?
- Yes No Don't know
24. Overall, how satisfied were you with the quality and appearance of the headstone, marker, or columbarium niche cover when it arrived?
- Very satisfied
 Somewhat satisfied
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied
 Very dissatisfied
25. If your loved one was interred in a columbarium, how satisfied are you that the quality and design of the columbaria are compatible with the overall appearance of the cemetery?
- Very satisfied
 Somewhat satisfied
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied
 Very dissatisfied
26. If your loved one was a veteran, did you receive a Presidential Memorial Certificate?
- Yes No
- (If your loved one was NOT a veteran, please SKIP TO Q27)*
27. Looking back at your overall experiences with the national cemetery, which items would you have liked more information about? *(Mark all that apply)*
- None, I was well informed
 Details of the committal service
 Military funeral honors
 Location of gravesite
 Layout of cemetery (maps)
 Directions to cemetery
 Presidential Memorial Certificate
 Floral policy
 Headstone or marker inscription options
 Timeline for placement of headstone/marker

Questions for Funeral Directors ↓

- P. How long does it typically take to confirm the scheduling of an interment at the national cemetery?
- Less than 1 hour
 1 to 2 hours
 2 to 4 hours
 4 to 8 hours
 1 to 2 days
 More than 2 days
- Q. Overall, how satisfied were you with the length of time it took to confirm the scheduling of an interment?
- Very satisfied
 Somewhat satisfied
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied
 Very dissatisfied
- R. During committal services, how often do you receive the support you need from cemetery staff?
- Always
 For the most part
 Occasionally
 Never
- S. Generally, how often do committal services at the national cemetery start on time?
- Always
 For the most part
 Occasionally
 Never
- T. If you are delayed in arriving at the national cemetery for a scheduled service, how successful is the cemetery in adjusting the schedule to accommodate the family?
- Very successful
 Somewhat successful
 Neither successful nor unsuccessful
 Somewhat unsuccessful
 Very unsuccessful
 Don't know/Not applicable

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.

- | | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know/ Not applicable |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| a. The maintenance of the cemetery grounds is excellent. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. The upkeep of the headstones, markers, or columbarium niche covers is excellent. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. The maintenance of other landscape features (e.g., flowers, trees, shrubs) is excellent. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. The committal shelter used for the service was clean, free of safety hazards, and private. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. There is adequate handicap accessibility for visitors who need it. .. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. The availability of restrooms is suitable to accommodate visitors on busy days. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

