

OPERATIONAL STANDARDS AND MEASURES FOR VA NATIONAL CEMETERIES

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: To update National Cemetery Administration (NCA) policy and procedures for operational standards and measures for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries.

2. SUMMARY OF CHANGES: This directive updates references and incorporates the current organizational structure of NCA's program and district offices, service lines, and cemeteries in addition to revising roles and responsibilities.

3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: NCA, Office of Cemetery Operations and Office of Finance and Planning, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, are jointly responsible for the contents of this directive.

4. REFERENCES AND RELATED PUBLICATIONS:

a. NCA Directive 0057 – NCA Environmental Management Program, March 26, 2019.

b. NCA Directive 0330 – Organizational Assessment and Improvement (OAI) Program, September 21, 2021.

c. NCA Directive 0340 – Compliance Review Program (CRP), October 4, 2022.

d. NCA Directive 3012 – Uniforms and PPE for National Cemetery Employees, November 15, 2023.

e. NCA Directive 3120 – Interment Area Layout, September 19, 2022.

f. NCA Directive 3130 – Accounting for Remains, May 19, 2021.

g. NCA Directive 3350 – Inscriptions for Government-Furnished Headstones, Markers, and Niche Covers, May 6, 2020.

h. NCA Directive 3410 – Integrated Pest Management at VA National Cemeteries, April 30, 2012.

i. NCA Directive 3425 – Floral Policy in VA National Cemeteries, January 3, 2020.

j. NCA Directive 7700 – NCA Occupational Safety and Health Program, January 14, 2019.

k. 41-SOP-006 – Interment Operations, September 29, 2023.

l. 41-SOP-021 – Turfgrass Maintenance, September 30, 2021.

m. 41-SOP-022 – Interment Area Layout, September 29, 2022.

5. SUPERSESSSION: This version of NCA Directive 3000 supersedes the previous version, dated January 4, 2010.

6. RECERTIFICATION: This publication is scheduled for recertification on or before September 19, 2029.

/s/

Ronald E. Walters

Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs

Distribution: Electronic

OPERATIONAL STANDARDS AND MEASURES FOR VA NATIONAL CEMETERIES

1. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY.

a. This Directive establishes what are collectively referred to as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration's (NCA) Operational Standards and Measures, which are:

(1) Operational standards for performing operations in key areas at all VA national cemeteries; and

(2) Performance measures for the operational standards established under paragraph 1.a.(1).

b. NCA's current Operational Standards and Measures are published under the title "NCA Operational Standards and Measures Guidebook" (Guidebook) and are accessible to all employees online as provided at the Appendix.

c. The statutory authority for this directive is codified in Section 2404 of Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.).

2. POLICY. NCA will:

a. Administer, operate, and maintain all VA national cemeteries to comply with the operational standards established by this Directive;

b. Routinely evaluate VA national cemeteries using performance measures established by this Directive to determine whether each facility is compliant with these standards; and

c. Use these Operational Standards and Measures where applicable when evaluating the performance of Veterans cemeteries that have received a grant from VA as described in 38 CFR part 39.

3. BACKGROUND. The Operational Standards and Measures established by this Directive support NCA's internal evaluation and assessment of VA national cemeteries and VA grant-funded Veterans cemeteries compliance with NCA's mission, purpose, and commitment to customer service in key operational areas. For the purposes of this Directive, any cemetery or monument site administered by NCA is subject to inspection and evaluation of compliance with its Operational Standards and Measures, to include Confederate cemeteries, Soldiers' lots, naval plots, and government lots. 38 U.S.C. § 2408 authorizes the Secretary to prescribe by regulation terms and conditions for VA grant-funded Veterans cemeteries. 38 CFR part 39 establishes compliance requirements for VA grant-funded Veterans cemeteries.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. **Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs (USMA)** will approve or disapprove proposed updates or changes to the Operational Standards and Measures.

b. **Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs (PDUSMA)** will concur or non-concur with proposed updates or changes to the Operational Standards and Measures prior to their presentation to the USMA for decision.

c. **Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations (41)** will:

(1) Establish and issue enterprise-level Operational Standards and Measures for the execution of operations at VA national cemeteries and VA grant-funded Veterans cemeteries in key operational areas and the evaluation of each cemetery's compliance with these standards;

(2) In conjunction with the Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning (42), review and concur or non-concur with proposed updates or changes to the Operational Standards and Measures prior to their presentation to the PDUSMA for review and concurrence; and

(3) Coordinate with the Director, Veteran Cemetery Grants Program, to determine and document which of the Operational Standards and Measures will apply to VA grant-funded State and Tribal Veterans Cemeteries for the purpose of the grant application process and execution of the Compliance Review Program governed by NCA Directive 0340.

d. **Executive Director, Cemetery Operations (41A)**, will coordinate with the Director, NCA Improvement and Compliance Service, to:

(1) Review and support briefings to the officials identified at paragraphs 4.b., 4.c., and 4.i. of this directive for updates or changes to the Operational Standards and Measures; and

(2) Publish the Guidebook electronically on NCA's intranet site.

e. **Deputy Director, Cemetery Operations (41A1)**, will coordinate with the Director, NCA Improvement and Compliance Service, to:

(1) Manage and maintain the Guidebook for currency, and for accessibility compliance for online publication;

(2) Notify the following NCA employees when Cemetery Operations (41A) and the Improvement and Compliance Service (42D) have published an updated Guidebook;

(a) NCA District Executive Directors to cascade to VA national cemetery Directors;

(b) Director and Deputy Director, Veterans Cemetery Grants Program; and

(c) Director, NCA Training and Safety; Deputy Director, Training; and Deputy Director, Safety.

(3) Assign one or more members of their staff to participate in the periodic review of the Operational Standards and Measures for recommending updates or changes (ref. paragraph 4.j.(1) and 4.j.(2)).

(4) Review and support briefings to the officials identified at paragraphs 4.b., 4.c., and 4.i. of this directive for updates or changes to the Operational Standards and Measures.

f. District Executive Directors will:

(1) Forward notification from the Deputy Director, Cemetery Operations (41A1) and/or the Director, Improvement and Compliance Service (42D) of an update to the Guidebook to the Cemetery Directors in their jurisdiction;

(2) Coordinate with their district office staff and Cemetery Directors to prioritize and incorporate requirements for achieving compliance with the Operational Standards and Measures into a cemetery's acquisition and/or construction project planning and related statements of work as practicable; and

(3) Upon request from the Deputy Director, Cemetery Operations (41A1) and/or the Director, Improvement and Compliance Service (42D), provide one or more district office staff members and one or more cemetery leadership team members to participate in the periodic review of the Operational Standards and Measures for recommending updates or changes (ref. paragraph 4.j.(2)).

g. Cemetery Directors will:

(1) Monitor their facilities for compliance with the Operational Standards and Measures, to include developing and maintaining all the required plans, programs, and systems identified therein;

(2) Coordinate with their District Executive Director and district office staff to prioritize and incorporate requirements for achieving compliance with the Operational Standards and Measures for their facilities into acquisition and/or construction project planning and related statements of work as practicable; and

(3) Upon request from NCA Central Office through their district office, participate in the periodic review of the Operational Standards and Measures for recommending updates or changes (ref. paragraph 4.j.(1) and 4.j.(2) and/or assign one or more cemetery employees to participate).

h. Director, Veterans Cemetery Grants Program (41C) will:

(1) Coordinate with the Deputy Under Secretary, Field and Programs and Cemetery Operations, to determine and document which of the Operational Standards and

Measures will apply to VA grant-funded Veterans cemeteries for the purpose of the grant application process and execution of the Compliance Review Program governed by NCA Directive 0340;

(2) Incorporate the applicable Operational Standards and Measures and any compliance requirements into all application forms and informational materials, as appropriate;

(3) Communicate these requirements and expectations to grant applicants and reiterate them to existing VA grant-funded Veterans cemeteries to promote compliance;

(4) Forward notification to VA grant-funded Veterans cemetery officials when the program makes updates or changes to its applicable Operational Standards and Measures; and

(5) Assign one or more members of their staff to participate in the periodic review of the Operational Standards and Measures for recommending updates or changes (ref. paragraph 4.j.(1) and 4.j.(2)).

i. **Deputy Under Secretary for Finance and Planning (42)** will, in conjunction with the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Programs and Cemetery Operations, review and concur or non-concur with proposed updates or changes to the Operational Standards and Measures prior to their presentation to the PDUSMA for review and concurrence.

j. **Director, NCA Improvement and Compliance Service (42D)**, will:

(1) At least biennially, convene operational stakeholders within NCA to include district offices, VA national cemeteries, Cemetery Operations, Veterans Cemetery Grants Program, and VA grant-funded Veterans cemetery participants, to review the Operational Standards and Measures and propose updates or changes;

(2) Present any proposed changes to the Operational Standards and Measures with recommendations to the USMA for decision through the officials identified at paragraphs 4.b., 4.c., 4.d., 4.e., 4.h. and 4.i. of this directive;

(3) Incorporate the Operational Standards and Measures as an element in NCA's Organizational Assessment and Improvement (OAI) program in accordance with NCA Directive 0330;

(4) Coordinate with the Director, Veterans Cemetery Grants Program, to support the execution of the responsibilities assigned in paragraph 4.h.; and

(5) Incorporate the Operational Standards and Measures as an element in NCA's Compliance Review Program (CRP) in accordance with NCA Directive 0340.

NCA OPERATIONAL STANDARDS AND MEASURES GUIDEBOOK ACCESS

The current version of the "NCA Operational Standards and Measures Guidebook" is maintained on the NCA Improvement and Compliance Service's NCA intranet site.