

Congregation B'nai Israel Cemetery
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
updated as of 08/10/2025

The passing of a loved one is a traumatic experience that can be compounded by the stress of arranging a funeral without any prior preparations or instructions from the deceased. Here are some Frequently Asked Questions, so that CBI members can consider their own preferences to instruct loved ones if planning to be buried at the CBI Cemetery.

Where is the CBI Cemetery?

- The cemetery is located on North King St, Northampton, on the right side approximately 1.2 miles north of the intersection of Bridge Road, King Street, and Damon Road. You can park on the street or drive into the cemetery which has a ring road to drive in one side and out the other.

Who can be buried in the CBI Cemetery?

- Jewish members of CBI or former members.
- Jews who are family members of CBI members
- Jews who are not connected to CBI membership in any way
- Non-Jewish individuals who are members of CBI and part of a family that includes or included a Jewish adult. Burial is in the Interfaith section of the cemetery, and Jewish members of the family can be buried with them.

What is the current cost to be buried in the CBI Cemetery?

There are 3 separate fees:

- Cost for the plot itself
 - An Individual CBI member in good standing for at least 5 years is entitled to plot at no cost. With a Family Membership an adjacent plot is reserved at no cost for a spouse or partner. Members of fewer than 5 years pay a prorated fee starting at \$2,500, reduced by \$500 for each of the first 5 years. Children are considered family members up to age 23 and would receive plots at no charge should they die.
 - A relative of a member in good standing - \$4,000
 - A former member in good standing of at least 10 years - \$2,500
 - A never-member who is a relative of someone buried at CBI, if the person buried was a member or former member - \$4,000
 - A Jewish person with no person or family connection to current or former CBI members - \$10,000
- Cost for excavation of the plot at the time of burial – this is a direct pass-through cost from the excavator at \$1,500; fee could be higher for weekend or winter frozen ground.
- Cost for perpetual maintenance of the cemetery - \$750, includes all landscaping, mowing, plowing and groundskeeping.

Do I still need to contract with a funeral home?

- The CBI Cemetery Committee is responsible for locating and preparing the site for burial, but a funeral home provides required permits, transport and a casket for the deceased.

- If you do not contract with a funeral home, you must comply with all permit regulations regarding burial in Northampton, as well as complying with Tahara (see below). You must consult with the CBI Cemetery Committee.

How do I choose a funeral home? What funeral home should I choose?

- You can use a funeral home of your choice. Ascher Zimmerman is a Jewish Funeral Home in Springfield. It can advise you on various Jewish funeral-related issues, and it can arrange for Tahara with the Springfield Chevra Kadisha. You can use a local non-Jewish funeral home, which is fine as long as they will allow our CBI Chevra Kadisha to come into their workroom to perform Tahara prior to burial, and provide us with the needed materials. See below.

Who prepares the deceased for Jewish burial (Tahara)?

- The CBI Cemetery requires that all Jewish deceased be prepared for burial, called Tahara, by a Chevra Kadisha group.
- A Chevra Kadisha group from CBI will prepare the deceased for Jewish burial when the funeral home is local and non-Jewish. Our Chevra Kadisha can also prepare the deceased at Ascher Zimmerman in Springfield; or A/Z can provide the use of a Chevra Kadisha in Springfield. A/Z can also contract with a non-Jewish funeral home to provide this service.
- CBI has separate male, female, and queer/transgender Chevra Kadisha groups, so that Tahara is performed by a group of the same gender as the deceased.

Can I reserve a specific plot? Or do I have to take the next available space in the cemetery?

- There is no cost to take the next in-line location along the row being filled. There is a \$500 fee per plot for members and non-members alike to choose a specific plot in advance.

What if I want a “Green Burial” – no casket?

- A body can be buried without a casket, simply wrapped in a shroud or a basket, and lowered into the ground similar to the way a casket is lowered.
- All other components of a CBI burial are “green”, including Tahara.

What if I wish to be cremated?

- Cremated remains cannot be buried in the CBI Cemetery.

If a loved one passes away, who do I call first to get the funeral/burial process in motion?

- Call the CBI Office and call the funeral home of your choice.
- The office staff will notify the Rabbi who will contact you; and will notify a member of the Cemetery Committee, who will also contact you. The Rabbi will offer consolation and help you plan the timing of the funeral and Shiva. The Cemetery Committee will explain logistics and discuss options for burial and the costs; if you don't know what funeral home you want, the committee member can help you with recommendations.

How soon is the funeral after death?

- As soon as possible, but this is determined in consultation with the Rabbi and the funeral home. Within Jewish tradition, burial should be within 24 hours of death, but given our modern realities of family travel and logistics, burial at CBI is typically within 72 hours of death.

Once the funeral has passed, what do I do to get a headstone put in place and when?

- You can contact any monument company. They need to follow specific guidelines that a member of the Cemetery Committee can give them. The Cemetery Committee has a list of monuments companies and their contact information.
- A headstone is usually placed within the year.

What other obligations does the family have post-burial?

- The Cemetery Committee provides perpetual landscaping. If there is damage to the stone due to ground shifting, settling, etc., it is the responsibility of the Cemetery. But if damage is due either to improper installation or other non-landscape issue, the family is responsible for the cost of repairs.

Who do I contact if I want to prepay my funeral and burial costs?

- For prepayment arrangements, contact Carol Katz. The Committee can collect your prepayment, provide you with documentation for your records, and document it in the cemetery records so that you will only have to pay the excavation costs at the time of the funeral.
- For funeral costs, contact a funeral home to make arrangements. Massachusetts funeral homes are allowed to establish funeral trusts, traditional or preneed insurance policies or annuities, or separate irrevocable bank accounts on behalf of those who wish to prepay their funeral expenses.

If a local non-member or a former member wants a Jewish burial locally, are there less costly alternatives?

- The Hebrew Burial Society Cemetery adjacent to the CBI Cemetery is currently an option. Also, some other Jewish cemeteries in the area are open to non-members. For more information on the adjacent cemetery, contact Bob Raymond at 413-627-9870. If a non-member chooses a cemetery other than CBI's, they will not be able to receive support from the CBI staff or Cemetery Committee, and having a Rabbi conduct a service must be arranged separately and privately.

Who to Contact on the CBI Cemetery Committee:

Ron Ackerman, Co Chair	rdackerm@live.com	413-584-4497
Scott Barton, Co Chair	swbarton1900@gmail.com	413-237-4309
Carol Katz, Secretary/Treasurer	carolkatz@gmail.com	413-364-0092

CBI Rabbi and Executive Director:

Rabbi Jacob Fine, 413-584-3593	rabbijacob@cbinorthampton.org
Laura Minsky, Executive Director, 413-584-3593	laura@cbinorthampton.org

