

## PROCUREMENT AND INSPECTION OF GOVERNMENT-FURNISHED BLANK NICHE COVERS/MEMORIAL WALL MARKERS

**1. PURPOSE:** This notice states new Memorial Programs Service (MPS) responsibilities and procedures related to procuring and inspecting Government-furnished blank niche covers and memorial wall markers.

**2. POLICY:** National Cemetery Administration (NCA) policy is that the marble and granite niche covers and memorial wall markers procured for installation on columbaria and memorial walls will be of the highest quality available to ensure a uniform overall appearance between newly manufactured and already installed covers and markers.

### 3. ACTION

Publication of this notice rescinds current procedures as stated in Sections III and IV of NCA Handbook 3320 – Receipt and Inspection of Government-Furnished Headstones/Markers at VA National Cemeteries. With the publication of this notice, the following policies/procedures will be followed by NCA staff:

a. NCA Design and Construction Service, VA Office of Construction and Facilities Management, and Veterans Cemetery Grants Program will notify MPS as far in advance as possible of projects that will include new columbaria/memorial walls so that MPS can provide assistance and plan for appropriate support staff to include inspecting materials. Information supplied to MPS will include project manager contact information, type of stone, quantity, and tentative requirement dates for delivery and inspection/acceptance of niche covers and/or memorial wall markers.

b. Solicitation and Procurement Phase: To ensure consistency of blank niche cover and memorial wall marker requirements, MPS will maintain a standard set of work specifications (to include drawings) that will be used for solicitations to procure blank niche covers and wall markers for new columbaria and memorial wall construction, as well as resupplying inventory at existing cemeteries as needed. MPS is responsible for reviewing and approving all samples associated with these solicitations, and notifying the Centralized Contracting Division (CCD) of accepted or rejected samples.

c. Delivery Phase: To ensure that all blank niche covers/memorial wall markers received for installation at newly constructed columbaria and memorial walls are of the highest quality, MPS has the lead responsibility and primary authority (assisted by staff of NCA Design and Construction Service and/or VA Office of Construction and Facilities Management, as available/needed) for inspecting the covers/markers. The niche covers/ memorial wall markers will be inspected by a member of the MPS Program Support Unit (PSU) to verify that the product supplied by the contractor meets or exceeds the contract specifications and the quality of the samples provided in the solicitation phase. In order for MPS staff to appropriately schedule inspections, the Cemetery Director, or the Resident Engineer responsible for the major construction project, must notify MPS PSU as soon as they know when the covers/markers will be ready for inspection, either (1) at the contractor's facility prior to shipment, or (2) at the cemetery after delivery is made.

d. Monitoring Phase: MPS PSU will monitor the performance of all headstone/marker, niche cover, memorial wall marker, and inscription contractors for timeliness and quality control. MPS will have the lead responsibility and primary authority for inspecting and accepting or rejecting shipments of Government-furnished niche covers/memorial wall markers ordered to resupply existing columbaria or memorial walls.

**3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** National Cemetery Administration, Office of Field Programs, Memorial Programs Service, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420, is responsible for the contents of this notice.

**4. RESCISSIONS:** The responsibilities and procedures stated in this notice rescind portions of NCA Handbook 3320 – Receipt and Inspection of Government-Furnished Headstones/Markers at VA National Cemeteries (August 14, 2009). See Change 1 (dated August 16, 2012) to the handbook that rescinds Section III, paragraph 2, and Section IV, paragraph 1, subparagraphs e.(1) and (2). Final changes will be included in the next revision of the handbook.

**5. EXPIRATION:** The information contained in this notice will remain in effect until incorporated into an update of NCA Handbook 3320.

/s/

Anita R. Hanson  
Director, Memorial Programs Service

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