

# Consumer's Guide to Headstone and Markers



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# The Difference Between Markers and Monuments

When choosing a cemetery space for the deceased or to memorialize an individual, you must decide between a marker or a monument. Both options are suitable but differ in size and shape.

Markers are usually small stone rectangles positioned above the plot, featuring carved names, dates, and other insignia.

Monuments, often larger vertical headstones, display the same information as markers. They can also be customized to reflect the personality of the deceased, taking forms such as three-dimensional crosses, statuettes, saints, or other figures.



## Do People Still Desire Monumental Statues to Mark Gravesites?



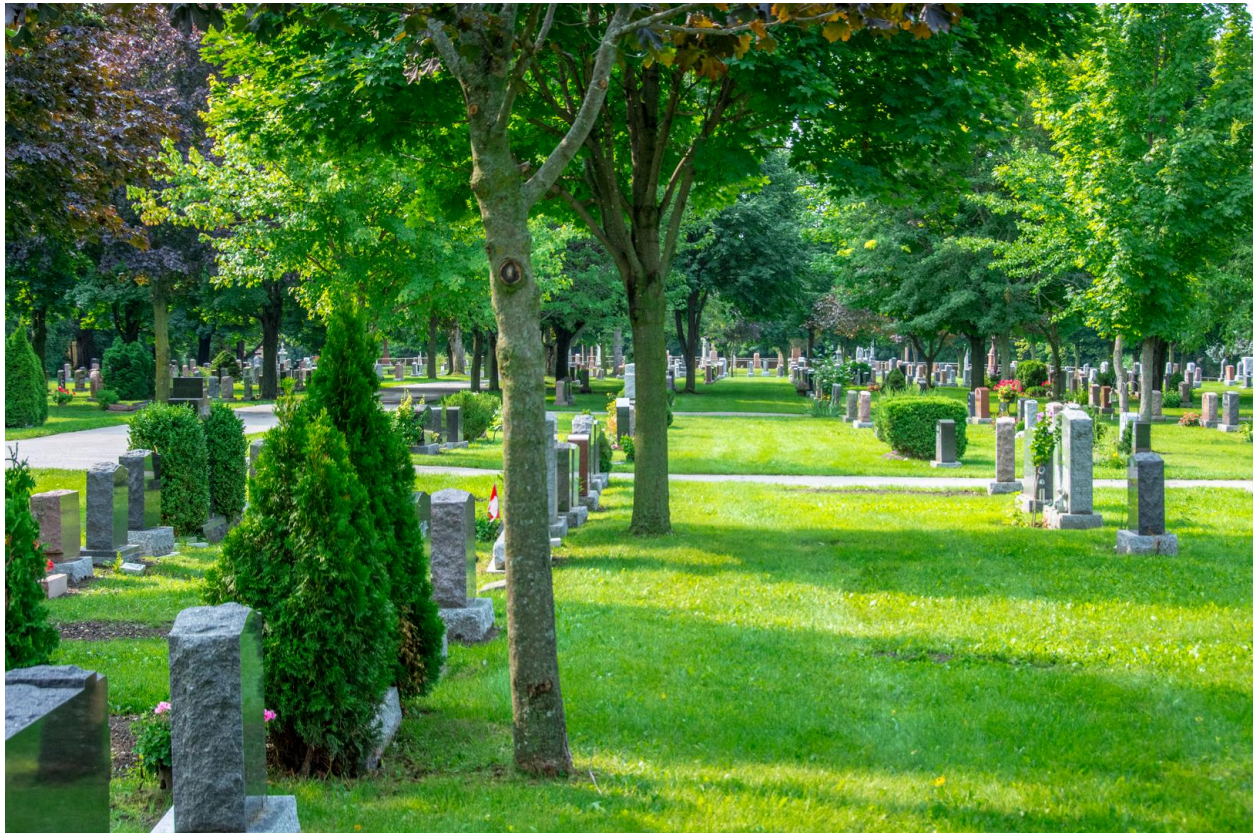
Burial trends and customs evolve over time, so what was popular decades ago may not be common today.

In the past, monumental statues were frequently used to mark gravesites, but their popularity has declined. Today, there's a growing emphasis on environmentally friendly burial options, such as interment in urn gardens or using compact, modest headstones to mark burial sites.

For those seeking monuments for themselves or loved ones, numerous options are available.

Grave monuments, typically made of granite, marble, or other materials, are commonly found in designated burial sites known as monumental cemeteries.

If interested, start by contacting your local funeral director to explore available options. Some public and private cemeteries may not permit large monumental statues due to space constraints, but your funeral director can assist in finding a suitable location.



For those who want to honor their loved one without a statue, there are various elegant and ornate headstone and grave marker options available, all customizable to reflect your loved one's wishes.

While large statues are less common nowadays, they remain a respectable option among several ways to honor a deceased loved one.



## Which is More Appropriate: Markers or Monuments?

In some cases, the deceased may have already bought a marker or monument as part of their pre-planned arrangements. In such instances, the memorials are either already in place and may just need dates added, or they will be ordered and placed later according to the family's convenience.

Those planning to order a monument later might consider placing a marker at the burial site in the meantime as a respectful gesture.



In some instances, surviving relatives must decide which option is most suitable for the individual and the situation. Certain cemeteries may only allow one type of memorial, so it's crucial to confirm what is permitted at the plot.

## Using Both Markers and Monuments

It's common for individuals to have both a marker and a monument for memorialization. Often, family burial spaces, including those for spouses, feature a single monument with the family name, alongside individual markers for each deceased member. This arrangement offers both uniformity and individuality for the family plot.



## Types of Monument Suppliers

Buying your headstone directly from your funeral director is often the easiest option, saving you time searching for another manufacturer. Additionally, your funeral director will ensure that your chosen design is permitted in your selected cemetery.

While most cemeteries offer grave memorial creation and installation services, you have the option to purchase your monument or marker from an outside vendor and have it installed at your chosen cemetery.

Numerous companies specialize in building and selling monuments and grave markers, often offering customization options. You can easily find one near you by searching online. Afterward, you'll simply arrange for the installation of the grave marker or monument at your chosen cemetery.



## Installation and Maintenance

Most cemeteries can install your memorial, often for a fee, especially if it's from an outside vendor. Some cemeteries offer perpetual care or maintenance services for an additional cost to upkeep your memorial.

If your chosen cemetery doesn't offer installation services, you'll need to find a local installer yourself. Start by asking your funeral home, as they often have contacts in the industry.

Cemeteries, particularly those with perpetual care services, routinely inspect grave markers and monuments. During your visits, you can also personally check the gravesite. If you detect any issues, promptly inform the cemetery staff for swift resolution.



Some families may choose to clean the monument or grave marker as a way to honor their loved one. The easiest method is using a soft bristle brush with water. If using soap, opt for a non-ionic detergent. Avoid harsh chemicals like ammonia, vinegar, or lemon cleaners, as they can damage the stone's surface.

## How to Choose a Monument or Marker

### Types of Monuments & Markers

First, select the type of monument or marker you prefer. Here are the most common types:

- Footstone: Made of marble, positioned at the foot of the grave.
- Upright Headstone: Traditional marker, standing upright at the head of the grave.
- Slant and Bevel Markers: Sloped stone markers used to distinguish individuals within family grave plots.
- Niche Marker: Found in mausoleums or columbariums, attached to the wall outside a niche for urn storage.
- Lawn-Level Marker: Stone markers level with the ground.



## Types of Monument & Marker Materials

Next, consider the material for the monument or marker:

- Granite: Known for durability, increasingly affordable.
- Marble: Smooth and chosen for aesthetics, prone to weathering and fading inscriptions.
- Stainless Steel: Less susceptible to weathering, growing in popularity and affordability.
- Bronze: Requires minimal upkeep, sturdy but expensive.
- Limestone: Looks nice but weathers easily, vulnerable to environmental decay and fading inscriptions due to its softness.

## Other Things to Consider

### Single or Companion Memorials

Decide if the memorial is for an individual or a married couple. For companion memorials, which accommodate two people and two burial spaces, width is typically the main consideration due to their broader size.





Families may opt for a single, larger memorial to celebrate the family unit, or individual memorials for each member.

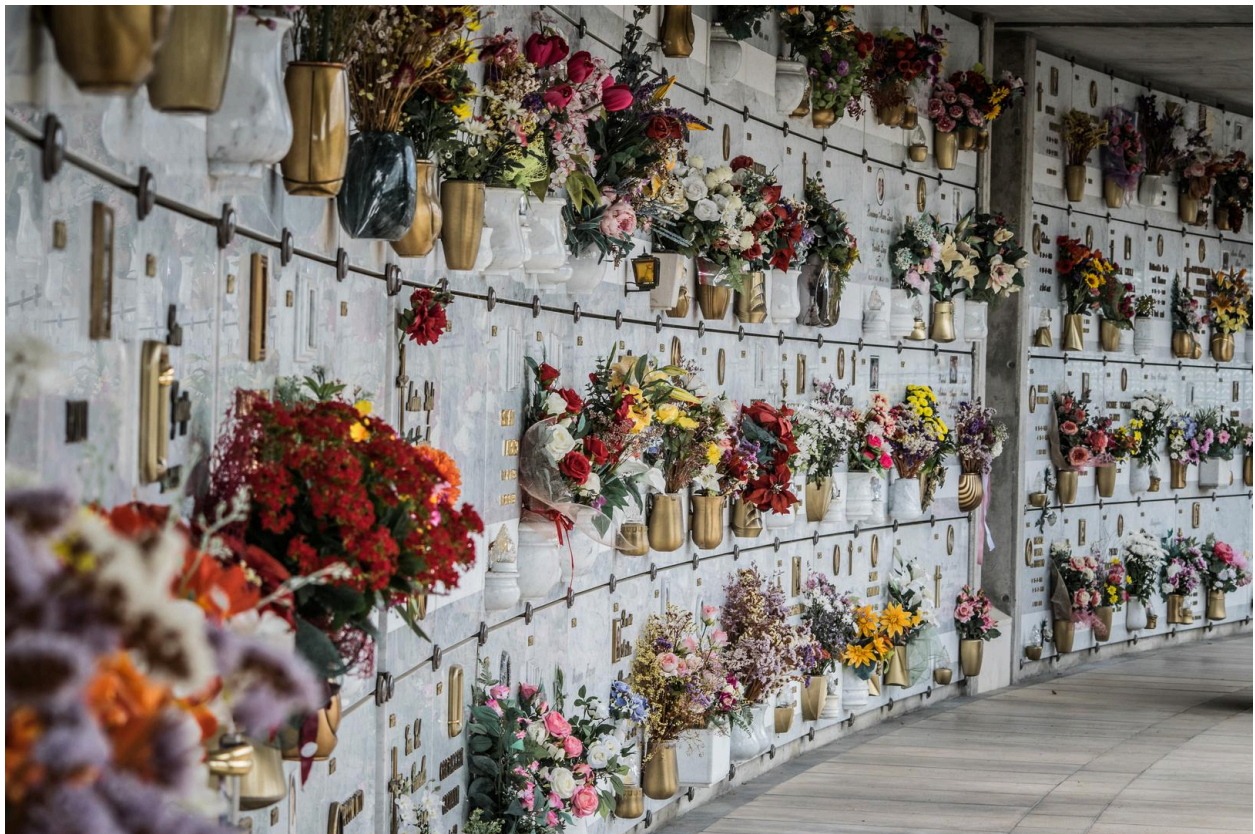
## Shape

Upright monuments offer various shape options, with virtually limitless possibilities for customization. Here are some popular styles:

- Serp Top with Front Chambers
- French Curve
- Single Heart
- Roof Top

## Colors and Finishes

You'll find numerous colors of marble and granite to choose from, including popular options like black, gray, brown, or red. However, a wide range of colors is available to suit your preferences.



After selecting the color, you can choose the finish for the monument. There are multiple options available. A polished finish is smooth and glassy, causing the sun to reflect and shimmer off the monument.

A sawn side finish is the natural surface resulting from cutting the stone. It's somewhat smooth but retains a rougher texture compared to a polished stone.

A rock pitched edge, chiseled by hand, gives the stone a more natural appearance with rougher edges.

## Additions

After selecting the marker type, material, size, and color, there are additional considerations for your memorial. The next step involves designing the front appearance.



Font - Font selection offers numerous options for your memorial inscription. You can choose from popular fonts or even create a custom one.



Sand-carved artwork - The options for artwork carved into the monument are vast. Memorialists typically offer catalogs with hundreds of choices, ranging from religious symbols to nature settings, animals, vehicles, military insignia, and more. These carvings can represent various hobbies or interests.

Laser etchings - Laser etching provides an alternative to sand-carved artwork. You can select from an image library or request custom etching of your choice.

Ceramic tiles - These images are inset into the memorial on a durable, non-fading ceramic tile, usually featuring a color photograph print.

Epitaphs - An epitaph is a phrase memorializing someone who has passed away. Whether it's a favorite saying, Bible verse, or song lyric, it can be inscribed on the memorial.

## Questions to Ask the Funeral Home or Cemetery Professional

1. Which monument materials or shapes are permitted?
2. What are the allowed monument sizes? Ensure compliance based on whether you have a single or companion burial space.
3. Which granite colors are permitted? Common colors are typically allowed, but uncommon choices should be verified.
4. Are flower vases permitted? Some memorials come with bronze or granite vases, but confirmation from the cemetery is advisable.
5. Are photo memorials allowed? Adding ceramic tiles or other decorative elements may not be permitted in certain cemeteries.
6. Are there any additional restrictions?