



The Temple Beth Hatfiloh cemetery is the oldest Jewish cemetery in Washington State. Established in 1874, the cemetery was established by the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Puget Sound (HBS), the first Jewish communal organization in Washington, and predates TBH by 63 years. At the time of the establishment of the cemetery, the HBS purchased 3 acres of land from the local Masonic Lodge. In the 1920s, the HBS deeded back to the Masons all but .4 of an acre, to be maintained in perpetuity as a Jewish cemetery.



During the 1950s the HBS disbanded and transferred responsibility for the cemetery to Temple Beth Hatfiloh, which had been established in 1937. Subsequently, additional sections of the Masonic cemetery have been purchased for use by the Jewish community.



Temple Beth Hatfiloh currently maintains two cemeteries for use:

- The **TBH Historic Cemetery** is for exclusively Jewish burial.
- The **TBH Family Cemetery** is for burial of Jews and their non-Jewish partners.

Both are located within the grounds of the Masonic Memorial Park, off North Street in Tumwater. Currently TBH works in partnership with the Masonic Memorial Park for the care and maintenance of this sacred space.

TO PURCHASE CEMETERY PLOTS

All sales of cemetery plots are handled through Temple Beth Hatfiloh. Once payment is made to TBH, a deed will be issued by Masonic Memorial Park. Purchase and use of plots in the TBH cemeteries are subject to all rules and regulations as established by the TBH Cemetery Committee and Board of Directors. Cemetery rules are found on the opposite side of the page. For more information, contact the TBH Office at tbh@bethhatfiloh.org or (360) 754-8519.

Rabbi Seth Goldstein is available to answer questions regarding Jewish burial practice, eligibility for burial, etc. and can be reached at rabbi@bethhatfiloh.org. Plots are available for advance purchase in either cemetery, and payment plans may be available at the discretion of the Cemetery Committee.

Costs per plot for either cemetery (as of August 1, 2023) are as follows:

- **\$2,500** for members of Temple Beth Hatfiloh
- **\$5,000** for non-members who are residents of Thurston, Mason, Lewis and Grays Harbor Counties
- **\$10,000** for non-members from other locations

Rates dependent on membership status and geographic area of the deceased at the time of death. One must be a member of TBH in good standing for at least three years to be eligible for the member rate. The member rate applies to TBH members and dependent children; non-member life-partners of TBH members and other family members must pay the non-member rate. Members not in good standing and former members must pay the non-member rate. All cemetery plot sales are subject to approval by the TBH Cemetery Committee.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The above fees are for plot purchases ONLY. At the time of burial you will also incur charges from the Masonic Memorial Park (for opening and closing of the gravesite) and the funeral home you choose to use (for preparation, transportation, coffin, and other related costs) that are unrelated to the plot purchase and not managed by Temple Beth Hatfiloh. Traditional Jewish burial preparation (*Chevra Kadisha*) is arranged through TBH by donation.

Temple Beth Hatfiloh Cemetery Rules

- 1) Only Jews may be buried in the Historic Cemetery. You are Jewish if your mother or father, or both, by birth or adoption, are Jewish and you affirm your Jewishness through positive acts of Jewish identity, or if you have been converted to Judaism by an ordained Rabbi.
- 2) Jews, their non-Jewish life partners and immediate family members may be buried in the Family Cemetery, or the Family Section of the Historic Cemetery
- 3) If an individual purchased a plot in full under one status and subsequently their status changed (i.e., moved, became a member of TBH or left membership, etc.), the original purchase price will be honored and no additional costs will be incurred nor refunds granted.
- 4) Cemetery plots are available for pre-purchase, and one may enter into a payment plan with terms set with the Cemetery Committee. Full payment is required at the time the plot is to be used. If a Member in an active payment plan is no longer in good standing, or resigns from the congregation, they are then required to pay the Non-Member rate.
- 5) Plot purchase must be finalized prior to any burial taking place.
- 6) TBH will purchase back, at the original purchase price, burial plots offered for sale. Plots may not be independently sold to a third party. Those requesting reimbursement for turning in their cemetery plot(s) will receive the amount they paid less the cost of the deed paid for by the Cemetery Committee. The amount for a deed is currently \$200 per plot. A person requesting reimbursement will not receive the reimbursement noted in the above by-law until the cemetery committee is in possession of the deed. If the deed cannot be located, the person requesting to give up their plot(s) must provide a letter of disavowal of their right to a plot. The letter will note the specific plot(s) which is (are) being surrendered .
- 7) At the beginning of each fiscal year, or at other times as warranted, the Cemetery Committee will present to the Board for approval a rate schedule. This information, along with procedures for how to purchase cemetery plots, will be published in a document available to the community. Those purchasing plots will be informed that they will incur other costs associated with preparation and use of the burial plot that are not the purview of TBH .
- 8) Payment for a plot may be made with cash, check, or credit card. The person using the credit card is responsible for the fee associated with the card. The Cemetery Committee will receive the full cost of a plot.
- 9) The family of the deceased is obligated to place a permanent marker or headstone at the grave within one year of use of the plot. There shall be no display or placement of non-Judaic religious symbols on the marker in either cemetery. Plans for the permanent marker must be approved in advance by the TBH Rabbi or their designee. Failure to do so may result in removal of the stone at the owner's expense .
- 10) Recognizing that there are differing customs regarding Jewish burial, it will be the prevailing minhag of both the Historic Cemetery and the Family Cemetery to bury the deceased with the head towards the west and the feet towards the east. Reversals may be done at the family's discretion. However, the permanent marker must be placed on the west side of the plot regardless of the actual location of the head of the deceased .
- 11) Services conducted in TBH cemeteries if not of Jewish character shall be religiously neutral. Non-Jewish religious services for those interred in the cemeteries may be held on other premises. Jewish religious custom and practice calls for prompt interment of remains of Jewish deceased.
- 12) For plots purchased in the family cemetery after May 17, 2023, cremated remains may be placed in the TBH Columbarium only. Burial of cremated remains in the Family Cemetery is permitted only if the deceased is to be interred in the same plot with someone (e.g. a life partner) who is buried or plans to be buried. In this case—i.e., the double use of one plot, once for burial and once for inurnment—the fee for a regular cemetery plot is still required for both uses of the one plot. Burial of cremated remains in the Historic Cemetery is not permitted. Application of Jewish funeral practices for those who have been cremated will be at the discretion of the Rabbi.
- 13) Scattering of remains, whether after cremation, natural organic reduction, or alkaline hydrolysis, is not permitted in the Historic or Family Cemetery.
- 14) No burials may take place on Shabbat or Jewish holidays without express permission of the Rabbi or their designee.
- 15) Interpretation of the rules regarding eligibility for burial in the cemeteries, membership qualifications or other issues is the prerogative of the Rabbi of Temple Beth Hatfiloh. The Rabbi is to be notified of any burials, unveiling ceremonies or other uses of the TBH cemeteries whether or not they are the officiating clergy.