

BURIAL & MEMORIALS

New Regulation - Headstone and Marker Application Process Updates

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 38.632 "Headstone and Marker Application Process" became effective on July 1, 2009. This regulation describes the processes required to apply for a Government headstone and marker, as well as request a new emblem of belief be added to the list of emblems available for inscription on headstones and markers.

Who Can Apply for a Headstone or Marker?

Under this new rule, only the following individuals may apply for a headstone or marker:

1. the decedent's next-of-kin (NOK)
2. a person authorized in writing by the NOK
3. a personal representative authorized in writing by the decedent.

The following ordered list will be used by the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) to define the NOK for the purpose of determining who may apply for a Government headstone or marker as well as, who may request an [emblem of belief](#) not available for inscription:

1. Surviving Spouse (including common law)
2. Children by age
3. Parents — biological, adoptive, step, foster
4. Brothers/sisters— half, step
5. Grandparents
6. Grandchildren
7. Uncles/Aunts
8. Cousins
9. Nieces/Nephews
10. Other lineal descendants

Any individual authorized in writing by the NOK, or a personal representative authorized in writing by the decedent may also apply for a headstone or marker. If someone other than the NOK is applying for the headstone or marker, the application package must include a written statement signed by the NOK or decedent authorizing that person (the applicant) to apply for this benefit. A notarized statement is not required for these purposes.

NCA will also accept applications from funeral home directors, cemetery officials, and Department of Defense appointed Casualty Assistance Officers, since they generally are authorized to represent the decedent or the NOK. When a cemetery is historic and/or does not have officials that are responsible for the administration of the cemetery, then the landowner may be the applicant.

Source: <http://www.cem.va.gov/hm/hmqa.asp>