

HEROES ACRE POLICY

Item A-ET (1a-2009) CM 30/07/2009	IMPLEMENTATION OF A HEROES ACRE POLICY
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Item A-ET (06-2008)}

RESOLVED:

1. **That** the contents of the report regarding the proposed new Heroes Acre Policy **BE NOTED**.
2. **That** the proposed new Heroes Acre Policy, attached to the report as **Annexure "A"**, **BE ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED**.
3. **That** the Heroes Acre Policy **BE IMPLEMENTED** from the first day of the month following approval by Council.

HEROES ACRE POLICY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction and background
2. General policy principles
3. Setting aside of Heroes acres and military and police graves areas
4. Permission to bury in a heroes acre and military and police graves acres
 - 4.1 Criteria for conferring Hero status to be permitted to be buried in the Heroes Acres
 - 4.2 Criteria for burial in the Military and Police Graves Acre
5. Payment of burial tariff
6. Record keeping of deceased burial in heroes acres/military and police graves acres/monument
7. Dimensions of grave excavations
8. Forms of Communication
9. Characteristic of the burial section
 - 9.1. Heroes Acre
 - 9.2 Military, Police and Emergency Grave Acres (MPEGA's)
 - 9.3 Dimension of grave excavations and plots
 - 9.4 Monuments in the Heroes acres
 - 9.5 Monuments in the Military, Police and Emergency services graves acres
10. Horticultural maintenance of heroes acres; Military, Police and Emergency Services Graves Acres (MPESGA's) and monuments
11. Program of commemoration
12. Updating of database on deceased heroes
13. Procedures for burial in the Heroes acres
 - 13.1 General Criteria for confirming Heroes Status
 - 13.2 Information required when applying for burial in Heroes Acre
 - 13.3 Information required when applying for burial in Military, Police and Emergency Service Graves

EKURHULENI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY HEROES ACRE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Historically those buried in a Heroes Acre were generally uniformed personnel who died whilst on active duty, either in the military or police force. This effectively meant that such graves and the concept of Heroes Acre became synonymous.

However, such spaces within Cemeteries ignored the fact that communities experienced the need for a under range of burial to be accommodated and which would further include:

- Acknowledged military combatants who died during the struggle against apartheid.
- Acknowledged activists who either died during apartheid or had dedicated their lives to bringing about a democratic South Africa and who have subsequently passed away.
- Acknowledged Heroes of late who have contributed to South Africa as a country and or to a person(s) through deed or act in a positive manner.

2. GENERAL POLICY PRINCIPLES

Hero means a person who performed a heroic act on behalf of the Country and is recognised therefore by Council (By laws)

Heroes Acre means an area of land set aside for the burial of a hero (by laws)

Military Service means serving or being in the service of the armed forces of the Country

Military/Police and Emergency Services Graves Area (MPESGA's) means an area within a cemetery that has specifically been set aside at the burial of the informal members of: South African National Defence force; South African Police Services and Local Government's Police and Emergency Departments.

Spouse means being the husband, wife or acknowledged life partner of the "Hero"

Heroes Acre Policy refers to the official policy that regulates the burial of heroes; military/policy and emergency services personnel.

Family means a group consisting of one or two parents and their children living together as a unit / a group of people related by blood or marriage / all the descendants of a common ancestor / a group united by a significant shared characteristic.

3. SETTING ASIDE OF HEROES ACRES AND MILITARY AND POLICE GRAVES AREAS

- 3.1 Council would set aside a burial block in a cemetery as a "Heroes Acres" for the interment of "Heroes"
- 3.2 Council would set aside burial block in a cemetery as a Military/Police Graves Area for the burial of serving uniformed members of: South African National Defence Force, South African Police Service, Local Governments' Police and Emergency Service Department
- 3.3 The burial block referred to in (2) above would be equally divided between the deceased of the South African Defence Force; South African Police Services, Local Governments' Police and Emergency Services.

- 3.4 The burial block set aside as Heroes Acres and Military/Police/Emergency services areas, would be located in identified, regional cemeteries within the administrative regions serving the population of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality subject to availability of space

4. PERMISSION TO BURY IN A HEROES ACRE AND MILITARY AND POLICE GRAVES ACRES

No burial may take place in the “Heroes Acre” or “Military, Police and Emergency Service Graves Acres” (MPEGA’s) unless permission has been granted by the Executive Mayor or nominee.

4.1 CRITERIA FOR CONFERRING HERO STATUS TO BE PERMITTED TO BE BURIED IN THE HEROES ACRES

4.1.1 A “Hero” is a person, who in life or death distinguishes one self extraordinarily in the military field or in other unselfish service or deeds, to the people or country of South Africa.

4.1.2 A “Hero” should display the following characteristics:

- Loyalty to and official membership of an institution recognized by the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality or recognition by such institution of the action or heroic deed
- Commitment to the Country
- Consistency of involvement
- Commitment to the ethos and credo of such Institution
- Consistency of involvement with such institution

4.2 CRITERIA FOR BURIAL IN THE MILITARY AND POLICE GRAVES ACRE

4.2.1 The criteria for burial in the Military, Police and Emergency Services Graves Acres (MPEGA’s) are:

- a. Must have been a serving member of the South African National Defence Force / South African Police Service of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department, at the time of his/her demise;
- b. Confirmation must have been received from the commanding officer/ senior officer of the unit in which the deceased’s rank/position; unit/branch engaged and submit a detail motivation for permission to be buried in the Military, Police and Emergency Services Graves Area.

4.2.2 The final decision to permit the deceased to be buried in the “Military, Police and Emergency Service Graves Acres” (MPESGA) rests with the Executive Mayor or nominee.

4.2.3 Upon acceptance to be buried in the “Military, Police and Emergency Services Grace Acres” (MPESGA’s), the family of the deceased would confirm agreement to comply with stipulations for burial in the said burial block.

5. PAYMENT OF BURIAL TARIFF

- 5.1 Upon approval of the status of “Hero” on the deceased to be buried in the Heroes Acre”, the relevant Cemetery and Crematorium tariff be paid from the Mayoral Discretionary fund.
- 5.2 Upon approval to be buried in the “Military, Police and Emergency Services Graves Acre” the relevant Cemetery and Crematorium tariff be paid by the specific department or organization.

6. RECORD KEEPING OF DECEASED BURIALS IN HEROES ACRES/ MILITARY AND POLICE GRAVES ACRES

Over and above the information required as per Chapter 3: Burials; Section 1: Burial Registers, the motivation for those being buried as Heroes in the Heroes Acre should be included in the Municipality’s burial records.

7. DIMENSIONS OF GRAVE EXCAVATIONS

The dimension of the Grave Excavation is as applicable in Chapter 4: Grave Excavation and plots in stipulated in the current “Cemetery and Crematorium By-laws” of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, adopted as Council Resolution: SR8A/2003 dated 25 January 2007.

8. FORMS OF COMMEMORATION

The forms of commemorations include:

- a. Heroes Acres for the burial of Heroes;
- b. Military, Police and Emergency Service Graves Acres (MPESGA’s) for the burial of serving military and/or police personnel;
- c. Monuments designed by a registered architect or landscape architect in conjunction with the Metro Parks Division and approved by the Council;
- d. Monuments designed by a registered architect or landscape architect in conjunction with the Metro Police Division and approved by the Council in a Military, Police and Emergency Service Acre to the honour of the deceased personnel, the whereabouts of those whose remains are unknown.

9. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BURIAL SECTION

9.1 Heroes Acre

- 9.1.1 Each of the dead should be commemorated individually by name either an inscription on the headstone or by inscription on the commemorative memorial;
- 9.1.2 The tombstone should be permanent.
- 9.1.3 The department responsible for the management of cemeteries and crematoria shall be responsible for the subsequent embellishment and maintenance of the tombstone at the said department’s cost.
- 9.1.4 The dimension of the memorial/tombstone in conjunction with the family.
- 9.1.5 The Heroes Acres would be full memorial sections.

9.2. Military, Police and Emergency Graves Acres (MPEGA's)

- 9.2.1 Each of the deceased should be commemorated individually by name, either by an inscription on the headstone or by inscription on the commemorative memorial.
- 9.2.2 The head stone should be permanent
- 9.2.3 The headstone should be uniform.
- 9.2.4 The headstone should have no distinction made on account of Military or civil rank, race or creed.
- 9.2.5 The headstone should comply with the specifications as agreed to by the Department responsible for Cemeteries and Crematoria and the relevant Department within the South African National Defence Force, South African Police Services, South African, and Local Governments' Police and Emergency Services.
- 9.2.6 At the top of each headstone is engraved the national emblem or the service or regimental badge, followed by the rank, name, unit, date of birth, age, a religious emblem, and at the foot an inscription chosen by the relatives.
- 9.2.7 The allocation of Military Police and Emergency Service Graves Acres (MPESGAs) should be reflective of the geographic location; demographics; composition and distribution of the said members
- 9.2.8 The headstone would be erected on a berm that would be supplied by the Council.
- 9.2.9 The military, Police and Emergency Services Graves Areas (MPEGA's) would be a berm section.

9.3. Dimension of grave excavations and plots

The Dimension of graves excavation and plots are as stipulated in Chapter 4: Graves Excavation And Plots of the current Cemetery and Crematorium By-laws of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality.

9.4. Monuments in the Heroes Acres

A proposed monument for erection in the Heroes Acre must be approved by the Environmental Development Portfolio Committee; the relevant building and engineering departments of the Municipality as well as the Metro Parks Division prior to erection.

9.5. Monuments in the Military, Police and Emergency Services Graves Acres

- 9.5.1 A proposed monument for erection in the Military, Police and Emergency Services Graves Acre must be approved by the Environmental Development Portfolio Committee, the relevant building and engineering departments of the Municipality as well as the Metro Parks Division prior to erection
- 9.5.2 The relevant South African Defence Force or the Police/ Emergency
- 9.5.3 When necessitated, the Municipality would undertake the necessary embellishment and maintenance and bill the relevant Department concern.

10. HORTICULTURAL MAINTENANCE OF HEROES ACRES; MILITARY, POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES GRAVES ACRES (MPESGAs) AND MONUMENTS

- 10.1 Heroes Acres and the Military, Police and Emergency Services Graves Areas necessitate an environment that is solemn, respectful and displays reverence.
- 10.2 Horticultural activities of turf-grass maintenance; headstone border planting; arboriculture and ornamental horticulture should be of the highest standard. Horticultural machinery and equipment used should be of the quietest models available.
- 10.3 Memorial and tombstones would be regularly monitored and maintained to prevent the deterioration of structures and to inhibit the growth of algae, lichen and mosses.
- 10.4 Monuments/tombstones in the Heroes Acre which have deteriorated, or been affected by man or natural disasters, or been vandalized, would be repaired as soon as possible.
- 10.5 Monuments/tombstones in the Military, Police and Emergency Services Graves Areas which have deteriorated, or been affected by man or natural disasters, or been vandalized, would be repaired as soon as possible by the relevant Department concerned. If such repairs are not affected timeously, Council would affect the necessary repairs and bill the department accordingly.

11. PROGRAM OF COMMEMORATION

11.1 “O.R.TAMBO MONTH”-

Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality has declared October month as “O.R. Tambo Month” and would annually be hosting events to commemorate his contributions towards the birth of the South Africa.

11.2 “CHRIS HANI MONTH”-

Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality has declared the month of April as “Chris Hani Month” and would annually be hosting events to commemorate his contribution towards the birth of the democratic South Africa

11.3 “REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY” TO COMMEMORATE DECEASED MILITARY AND POLICE PERSONS

- 11.3.1 Remembrance Sunday is internationally recognized for the remembrance for of Military dead.
- 11.3.2 Remembrance Sunday would be celebrated by the hosting of wreath laying ceremonies.
- 11.3.3 The day set aside annually, is the 2nd or 3rd Sunday in November – as determined by the SANDF.

11.4 “EKURHULENI REMEMBERS”

- 11.4.1 Is an educative and public participative process targeting the youth via schools located within Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality which would be encouraged to adopt a Hero’s Grave for a day.
- 11.4.2 The said school would be required to conduct horticultural maintenance of the said grave.
- 11.4.3 Any suitable plants would be determined and supplied by the relevant Head: Cemeteries, Crematoria and Conservation on behalf of the Council.

11.4.4 As the 16th June is Youth Day, it is proposed that the month of June be set aside for this initiative.

12. UPDATING OF DATABASE ON DECEASED HEROES

12.1 Information relating to the deceased “Heroes” should regularly be updated to ensure validity of information of the late Heroes.

12.2 Such information would be made available to the public.

13. PROCEDURES FOR BURIAL IN THE HEROES ACRES

13.1 General Criteria for conferring “Heroes” status

13.1.1 All Ward Councillors would be made aware of approved Criteria for conferring “Heroes” status on an individual.

13.1.2 The relevant Ward Councillor of the Ward in which the deceased ward would be buried, would submit an official request, detailing all required relevant information, to the Director: Metro Parks (or Head of the Department).

13.1.3 The required relevant information would be as indicated under “Heroes Acre Section” below.

13.1.4 A standard formatted official form for the “Conferring of Hero’s Status” would be made available at cemetery offices.

13.1.5 The request form from the relevant Councillor/s must reach the Director: Metro Parks (5) five working days prior to the intended burial ceremony.

13.1.6 The application would be submitted to the Executive Mayor or nominee.

13.1.7 All documents should comply with the approved Cemetery and Crematorium By-laws.

13.1.8 The Executive Mayor or nominee must finalize applications made in terms of this policy within 2 working days.

13.2 Information required when applying for burial in “Heroes Acre”

The Ward Councillor/s would submit a detail motivation of the deceased’s accomplishments as measured against the approved Criteria as indicated in the Criteria for conferring Hero status to be permitted to be buried in the Heroes Acres.

13.3 Information required when applying for burial in Military, Police and Emergency Service Graves Acres (MPESGAs)

13.3.1 The relevant department of the South African national Defence Force, or South African Police Services or Local Governments’ Police and Emergency Services, would submit detailed motivation and confirmation of the deceased, evaluated as indicated in 5.2: Criteria for burial in the Military, Police and Emergency Services Graves Acre to the Director: Metro Parks.

13.3.2 The required relevant information would be as indicated under Military, Police and Emergency Services Graves Acres (MPESGA’s)

13.3.3 The relevant documentation must reach the Director: Metro Parks five (5) working days prior to the intended burial ceremony.

13.3.4 The application would be submitted to the Executive Mayor or nominee for approval.

13.3.5 All documentation should comply with the Cemetery and Crematorium By-laws.

13.3.6 The Executive Mayor or nominee must finalize applications made in terms of this policy within 2 (two) working days.