

Ethics for Responsible Metal Detecting:

- **I will not enter a Sacred Church or Parish Grounds or Cemeteries for the purpose of metal detecting.**



The Ethics of Metal Detecting around or in a Cemetery is a Legal, Moral and Public Perception issue for the metal detecting hobbyist. Cemeteries are found on church grounds and old cemeteries, settler cemeteries, civil war cemeteries can be found on private or public lands. Today's highly used cemeteries are everywhere.

An ethical prohibition exists for metal detectorist where you know the deceased have been laid to rest. Also, in the past, the deceased may have been buried just outside of the known bounds of a historical or old cemetery. This may have taken place because the relatives could not afford a plot in the cemetery proper, or the deceased were buried before the cemetery boundaries were established. The situation is, if you make a decision to metal detect in or outside the boundaries of a cemetery you may be detecting over a deceased person's grave. I sincerely hope that detectorist consider how one's action of detecting cemeteries can affect the negative perception that the public develops for all metal

detectorists.

First let's explore the legality of metal detecting in or around cemeteries.

The law that has the greatest effect on metal detecting cemeteries is the Trespass Law that concern private or public properties. There are trespass laws in all states, counties and cities that cover the same thing-trespassing without permission on property.

Here is an example of the California Trespass Law. This example probably represents trespass laws that can be found most everywhere in the U.S.

California Penal Code 602 PC defines the crime of trespassing as entering or remaining on someone else's property without permission or a right to do so. The offense is a misdemeanor that carries a maximum sentence of 6 months in jail and a fine of \$1000.00.



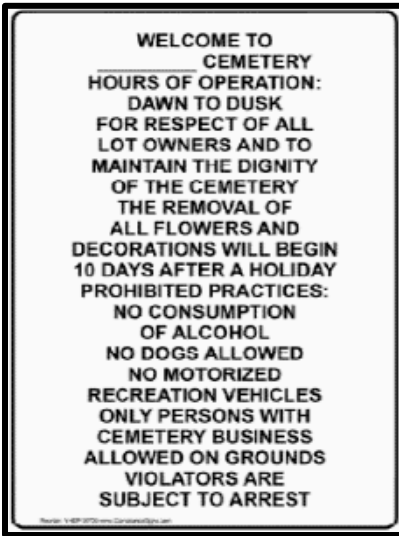
In the case of a cemetery, the owner of the cemetery property owns the land for roads or lanes, walking paths and other areas within the cemetery boundary. Then there is the ownership of the individual cemetery plots where the deceased are buried. These plots are also private property and should be covered under any trespass laws.

The land that borders a cemetery can either be public land or under private property ownership. These lands are also covered by trespass laws.

So just don't go in the cemetery with the intention of metal detecting. If you can't find good places to metal detect besides cemeteries, you should change hobbies.

The [Federal 1990 Native American Graves Protection Act](#), probably does not apply to metal detecting most know cemeteries but could potentially be applied to civil war and early settler cemeteries. This act covers Native American and must be followed at all times and in all situations.

Second what are the moral issues associated with metal detecting in a cemetery.



Definition: Morality is a principle concerning the distinction between right and wrong, good and bad behavior, or a system of values and principles of conduct, held by society.

Some detectorist may say the practice of detecting a cemetery is OK as long as the detectorist has cleared it with a cemetery official, uses proper recovery methods and keeps to the lanes and walkways. However, the public at large may view any type of metal detecting in any old or new cemetery very negatively. This negative public view will affect all metal detectorist in the long run even if no law is broken or permission was given to go there.

Common sense should tell you just don't go in the cemetery or around a cemetery with the intention of metal detecting.

Everyone should agree that metal detectors will never be used over or around graves and detectorist shouldn't carry shovels into cemeteries unless they want to spend the rest of their day talking with the police.

.Be Respectful of the Graves don't touch any monuments or headstones. This is not only disrespectful, but may cause damage to the memorials, especially older ones. Never remove anything from a gravesite or gravestone, such as flowers, coins, or tributes that have been left by family members.

Third what is met by public perception of metal detecting in a cemetery.

Just don't do it. If you can't find good places to metal detect besides cemeteries, you should change hobbies. The public does not understand that detectors only detect target a few inches below the surface from their perspective they detect far deeper.

One can understand why people would want to search around/in graveyards. There are probably old coins/relics that mourning people have placed or dropped on grave sites. The feeling maybe that the deceased resting in the graveyard won't care if you detect there.

The people driving by or visiting a grave would definitely take offense of somebody swinging a detector and digging in the cemetery. There are other places to go detect. Searching in or around cemeteries is very disrespectful and bad for the image of all detectorist.

Metal detecting in a cemetery does not create a good hobby image. Regardless of the law never metal detect inside any cemetery boundary or even outside of the physical boundaries of a cemetery. Since this could provide the public with a very disturbing image of a metal detectorist.

In Conclusion:

A metal detectorist needs to consider the trespass law, the morality and the public perception of metal detecting in or around a cemetery. Also, the Metal Detecting Code of Ethics is against detecting in cemeteries and finally a set Cemetery Etiquette needs to be followed by detectorist. The consensus is that it is extremely disrespectful to detect in cemeteries both to the dead and their living families. Digging in graveyards gives fuel to those who wish to paint detectorist as very cold-hearted. It's just not right and it's disrespectful to go near grave sites with a detector. It doesn't matter the age or location of the cemetery.

Just Don't Metal Detect a Cemetery.

Cemetery Etiquette

A cemetery is a unique place. While it is part of the everyday scene, it is not part of everyday life. That is to say, it is a place where tranquility and quiet are the desired norm, and activities of everyday life should be suspended.

Desert Lawn Funeral Home and Memorial Park [Website](#)

Cemetery visitors should:

- **Be sympathetic.**
Do not play loud music in cars, with the windows down, for everyone to hear.
- **Keep children in 'check.'**
No running, yelling, or rolling around on the ground. This is not a place for childhood games. Don't let them play on any of the monuments. While it is good to get children used to paying respects at a cemetery, they often don't fully understand the meaning of everything in the cemetery.
- **Do their best to not walk over the graves.**
Common sense leads you to know the basic shape of a grave; walk in between the headstones, and don't stand on top of a burial place.
- **Follow cemetery rules.**
Most have a sign near the entrance stating hours, rules about decorations, etc. Obey these rules. Rules about decorations serve to make sure the cemetery doesn't collect too much debris that the caretakers need to clean up. Flowers and other things can blow in the wind. It would be especially nice if any trash along the way was picked up, regardless of who left it.
- **Try not to remain in the cemetery after dark.**
Most cemeteries are open from dawn to dusk.
- **Don't litter.**
This creates extra work for the caretakers, and shows disrespect to the other families who come to mourn their loved ones. "Pack your trash" is a good rule of thumb: take your refuse with you when you go, or put it in trash receptacles.
- **Leash your pets.**
When you bring your pets, be sure to clean up after them
- **Follow the roadways and don't drive on the grass.**
Drive slowly and obey any traffic signs posted in the cemetery. Be careful to avoid any people since they might be upset and not paying complete attention to where they are going.
- **Be respectful.**
Keep the volume of voices down, and don't use offensive language.
- **Don't be overly friendly when talking to strangers.**
Other visitors may want to be alone.
- **Don't touch any monuments or gravestones.**
They are very meaningful to the families who placed them there. Some older memorials might be in disrepair and might fall apart under the slightest touch.
- **Don't take photos of other people or other funerals.**
This is a very private time for people. It's best to steer clear of any funerals occurring, and don't get in the way of funeral processions.

Ethics for Responsible Metal Detecting

- I will check Federal, State, County and Local Laws before searching. It is my responsibility to KNOW UNDERSTAND THE LAW.
- I will report to the proper authorities, individual who enter and / or remove artifacts from Federal or State Park / Preserves / Historical Sites.
- I will never remove or destroy priceless historical archeological treasures.
- **I will not enter a Sacred Church or Parish Grounds or Cemeteries for the purpose of metal detecting.**
- I will protect our Natural Resource and Wildlife Heritage.
- I will not enter private property without the owner's permission and when possible, such permission will be in writing.
- I will take care to refill all holes and try not to leave any damage.
- I will remove and dispose of any and all trash and litter that I find.
- I will not destroy or tamper with any structures on public or private property or what is left of Ghost Towns.
- I will not contaminate wells, creeks, or other water supplies.
- I will not tamper with signs, maintenance facilities or equipment and leave all gates as found.
- I will approach and educate those who do not follow good metal detecting practices.
- I will not metal detect in competitive hunts if I am the Hunt Master or plant hunt targets.
- I will make every effort to return found property to its rightful owner.
- I will be an ambassador for the hobby, be thoughtful, considerate and courteous at all times to others and their property.