

# Flagpole Etiquette

Flagpole Etiquette follows the guidelines of flag etiquette. The flag etiquette has been attached at the end of this document.

## **Determining flagpole size.**

Flagpole size should be chosen with the following taken into consideration: size of flag, material of flag, and number of flags being flown, and the wind speeds occurring at the project's location. It is recommended that flagpoles be designed according to NAAMM standards.

## **Distance between the flagpole and other structures.**

Place your flagpole away from other structures or other flagpoles the distance of at least 2 feet more than the length of the largest flag that will be flown. Take note to keep the flagpole away from trees that will grow larger. Always keep the flagpole a safe distance away from power lines.

Be sure to consider the location of the flag at all positions on the pole, i.e. during the raising of the flag, and at half-staff.

## **Multiple flagpoles used in a single display.**

If multiple flagpoles are used and the one flying the U.S. Flag is taller than the others, it may be placed in the center or to flag's far right.

When flown with flags of states, communities, or societies on separate flagpoles, which are of the same height and in a straight line, the flag of the United States is always placed in the position of honor - to its own right.

## **Flagpole maintenance.**

Periodic maintenance must be performed on flagpoles. The flagpoles must be cleaned from dirt, rust, and debris that could discolor or damage the flag.

The halyards and components that hoist the flag must be in good repair and the flagpole finials and truck assemblies at the top of the pole, must be secure so that the person hoisting the flag will be safe from falling objects.

The flagpole shaft must be inspected after major storms to verify that it has not suffered damage. Steel flagpoles must be inspected for rust and refinished to prevent rust from deteriorating the flagpole's integrity and to ensure that the rust does not discolor the flag.

If your pole has been hit by lightning, do not fly a flag on the flagpole. Have it inspected immediately by a qualified person for damage, including hidden damage below grade.

# **Flag Etiquette**

## **The United States Flag of America**

This version of the Flag Etiquette is categorized in an intuitive order of topics. A copy of the Official U.S. Flag Code follows. If you require more details of the flag code you may find them online under Title 4 at <http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode>.

### **When to display the flag.**

It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaves in the open. However, when a patriotic effect is desired, the flag may be displayed twenty-four hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.

The flag should be displayed on all days, and especially on:

New Year's Day, January 1  
Inauguration Day, January 20  
Lincoln's Birthday, February 12  
Washington's Birthday, third Monday in February  
Easter Sunday (variable)  
Mother's Day, second Sunday in May;  
Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May;  
Memorial Day (half-staff until noon), the last Monday in May  
Flag Day, June 14  
Independence Day, July 4  
Labor Day, first Monday in September  
Constitution Day, September 17  
Columbus Day, second Monday in October  
Navy Day, October 27  
Veterans Day, November 11  
Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November  
Christmas Day, December 25

and such other days as may be proclaimed by the President of the United States; the birthdays of States (date of admission) and on State holidays.

The flag should be displayed daily, on or near the main administration building of every public institution.

The flag should be displayed in or near every polling place on election days.

The flag should be displayed during school days in or near every schoolhouse.

Ordinarily, the flag should be displayed only between sunrise and sunset. It should be illuminated if displayed at night.

### **When to display the flag at half-staff.**

On Memorial Day the flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon only, and then raised to the top of the staff.

By order of the President, the flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of a State, territory or possession, as a mark of respect to their memory.

In the event of the death of other officials or foreign dignitaries, the flag is to be displayed at half-staff according to presidential instructions or orders, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with the law.

In the event of death of a present or former official of the Government of any state, territory or possession of the United States, the Governor of that State, territory or possession may proclaim that the National flag shall be flown at half-staff.

The flag shall be flown at half-staff thirty days from the death of the President or a former President.

The flag shall be flown at half-staff ten days from the death of a Vice President, the Chief of Justice or a retired Chief of Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The flag shall be flown at half-staff from the day of death until Interment of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court; a Secretary of an executive or military department, a former Vice President, or the Governor of the State, territory or possession.

The flag shall be flown at half-staff on the day of death and the following day for a member of congress.

### **When not to display the flag.**

The flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all weather flag is displayed. However, please keep the following in mind...

Never fly a flag in adverse weather when excessive wind or ice accumulation is possible, such as tropical storms, tornados, hurricanes, blizzards, etc.

Never fly a flag on a flagpole that has sustained structural damage, such as damage from lightning strikes or vehicle collisions.

The flag should not be displayed when the flag is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display.

### **How to raise and lower the flag.**

The flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered cautiously. Be respectful of the American flag at all times. Do not allow the flag to touch the ground any time during the raising and lowering process.

The flag, when flown at half-staff, should be first hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The flag should be again raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day.

The term "half-staff" means the position of the flag when it is one-half the distance between the top and bottom of the staff.

Ordinarily it should be displayed only between sunrise and sunset. It should be illuminated if displayed at night.

## **How to display the flag outdoors.**

It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaffs (flagpoles) in the open.

When it is displayed from the same flagpole with another flag - of a state, community, society or Scout unit - the flag of the United States must always be at the top except that the church pennant may be flown above the flag during church services for Navy personnel when conducted by a Naval chaplain on a ship at sea.

When flown with flags of states, communities, or societies on separate flagpoles, which are of the same height and in a straight line, the flag of the United States is always placed in the position of honor - to its own right.

The other flags may be smaller but none may be larger.

No other flag should ever be placed above it.

The flag of the United States is always the first flag raised and the last to be lowered.

When flown with the national banner of other countries, each flag must be displayed from a separate pole of the same height. Each flag should be the same size. They should be raised and lowered simultaneously. The flag of one nation may not be displayed above that of another nation.

Other conditions:

Over a Street - suspend vertically with the union to the north in an east and west street or to the east in a north and south street.

Over the Sidewalk - suspend from a rope extending from a house to a pole at the edge of the sidewalk, hoist out union first, from the building.

On a Wall Mount Pole - display from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from the windowsill, balcony, or front of a building, with the union of the flag at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half-staff.

When not on a Staff - display flat, whether indoors or out. When displayed against a wall, the union should be uppermost and to the flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left. When displayed in a window, it should be displayed in the same way, which is with the union or blue field to the left of the observer in the street.

When on a Stage - The flag of the United States of America, when it is displayed with another flag against a wall from crossed staffs, should be on the right, the flag's own right and the viewer's left, and its staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag.

## **Displaying the Flag Indoors**

When on display, the flag is accorded the place of honor, always positioned to its own right. Place it to the right of the speaker or staging area or sanctuary. Other flags should be to the left.

The flag of the United States of America should be at the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags of states, localities, or societies are grouped for display.

When one flag is used with the flag of the United States of America and the staffs are crossed, the flag of the United States is placed on its own right with its staff in front of the other flag.

When displaying the flag against a wall, vertically or horizontally, the flag's union (stars) should be at the top, to the flag's own right, and to the observer's left.

### **When used to cover a casket.**

The flag should be placed with the union at the head and over the left shoulder. It should not be lowered into the grave.

### **How to dispose of worn flags.**

The flag should be cleaned and mended when necessary. When the flag is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem or display, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.

We recommend contacting your Local VFW or American Legion chapter when you need to have your flag destroyed. They often accept worn flags and dispose of them during scheduled ceremonies for this purpose, often on Flag Day, June 14th. Many Cub Scout Packs, Boy Scout Troops, and Girl Scout Troops retire flags regularly as well.

### **Folding the flag.**

To store the flag it should be folded neatly and ceremoniously. Fold the flag in half width-wise twice. To form the perfect triangle, begin folding at the striped end and work through until the only the field of stars is exposed. Then, take the remaining fabric and fold down and tuck inside the triangle.

### **Parading and saluting the flag.**

When carried in a procession, the flag should be to the right of the marchers. When other flags are carried, the flag of the United States may be centered in front of the others or carried to their right. When the flag passes in a procession, or when it is hoisted or lowered, all should face the flag and salute.

To salute, all persons come to attention. Those in uniform give the appropriate formal salute. Citizens not in uniform salute by placing their right hand over the heart and men with a head cover should remove it and hold it to left shoulder, hand over the heart. Members of organizations in formation will salute upon command of the person in charge.

Render the pledge of allegiance by standing at attention, facing the flag, and saluting.

When the national anthem is played or sung, citizens should stand at attention and salute at the first note and hold the salute through the last note. The salute is directed to the flag, if displayed, otherwise to the music.

### **Ways not to use the flag.**

That no disrespect should be shown to the flag of United States of America; the flag should not be dipped to any person or thing. Regimental colors, state flags, and organizations or institutional flags are to be dipped as mark of honor.

The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property.

The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water or merchandise.

The flag should never be carried flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free.

The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding, or drapery. It should never be festooned, drawn back, nor up, in folds, but always allowed to fall free. Bunting of blue, white and red, always arranged with the blue above, the white in the middle and red below, should be used for covering a speaker's desk, draping the front of the platform, and for decoration in general.

The flag should never be fastened, displayed, used or stored in such manner as to permit it to be easily torn, soiled or damaged in any way.

The flag should never be used as a covering for a ceiling.

The flag should never have placed upon it, nor on any part of it, nor attached to it any mark, insignia, letter, word, figure, design, picture or drawing of any nature.

The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying or delivering anything.

The flag should never be used for advertising purposes in any manner whatsoever. It should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs and the like, printed or impressed on paper napkins or boxes or anything that is designed for temporary use and discard. Advertising should not be fastened to a staff or halyard from which the flag is flown.

No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform. However, a flag patch may be affixed to the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen and members of patriotic organizations. The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing. Therefore, the lapel flag pin being a replica should be worn on the left lapel near the heart.

The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem or display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.

# Flag Etiquette - Official U.S. Flag Code

The following laws and regulations were amended July 7, 1976, by the 94th Congress of the United States. They set forth the existing rules, customs and etiquette pertaining to the display and use of the flag of the United States of America.

## Section 1

The following codification of existing rules and customs pertaining to the display and use of the flag of the United States of America shall be and is hereby established for the use of such civilians or civilian groups or organizations as may not be required to conform with regulations promulgated by one or more executive departments of the Government of the United States. The flag of the United States, for purposes of this chapter, shall be defined according to Title 4, United States Code, Chapter 1, section 1 and section 2, and Executive Order 10834 issued pursuant thereto.



## Section 2

- A. It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaves in the open. However, when a patriotic effect is desired, the flag may be displayed twenty-four hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.
- B. The flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered cautiously.
- C. The flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all weather flag is displayed.
- D. The flag should be displayed on all days, especially on New Year's Day, January 1; Inauguration Day, January 20; Lincoln's Birthday, February 12; Washington's Birthday, third Monday in February; Easter Sunday (variable); Mother's Day, second Sunday in May; Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May; Memorial Day (half-staff until noon), the last Monday in May; Flag Day, June 14; Independence Day, July 4; Labor Day, first Monday in September; Constitution Day, September 17; Columbus Day, second Monday in October; Navy Day, October 27; Veterans Day, November 11; Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November; Christmas Day, December 25; and such other days as may be proclaimed by the President of the United States; the birthdays of States (date of admission) and on State holidays.
- E. The flag should be displayed daily, on or near the main administration building of every public institution.
- F. The flag should be displayed in or near every polling place on election days.
- G. The flag should be displayed during school days in or near every schoolhouse.

## Section 3

That the flag, when carried in a procession with another flag or flags, should be either on the marching right; that is, the flag's own right, or if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.

- A. The Flag should not be displayed on a float in a parade except from a staff, or as provided in subsection (j).

- B. The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, or sides or back of a vehicle or of a railroad train or boat. When the flag is displayed on a motorcar, the staff shall be fixed firmly to the chassis or clamped to the right fender.
- C. No other flag or pennant should be placed above or, if on the same level, to the right of the flag of the United States of America, except during church services conducted by naval chaplains at sea, when the church pennant may be flown above the flag during church services for the personnel of the Navy.
- D. The flag of the United States of America, when it is displayed with another flag against a wall from crossed staffs, should be on the right, the flag's own right, and its staff should be in front of the other flag.
- E. The flag of the United States of America should be at the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags of States or localities or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs.
- G. When flags of States, cities or localities, or pennants of societies are flown on the same halyard with the flag of the United States, the latter should always be at the peak.
- F. When the flags are flown from adjacent staffs, the flag of the United States should be hoisted first and lowered last. No such flag or pennant may be placed above the flag of the United States or to the United States flag's right.
- H. When flags of two or more nations are displayed, they are to be flown from separate staffs of the same height. The flags should be of approximately equal size. International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another nation in time of peace.
- I. When the flag of the United States is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from a windowsill, balcony, or front of a building, the union of the flag should be placed at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half-staff. When the flag is suspended over a sidewalk from a rope extending from a house to a pole at the edge of the sidewalk, the flag should be hoisted out, union first, from the building.
- J. When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be uppermost and to the flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left. When displayed in a window, the flag should be displayed in the same way, with the union or blue field to the left of the observer in the street.
- K. When the flag is displayed over the middle of the street, it should be suspended vertically with the union to the north in an east and west street or to the east in a north to south street.
- L. When used on a speaker's platform, the flag, is displayed flat, should be displayed above and behind the speaker. When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the flag of the United States of America should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the clergyman's or speaker's right as he faces the audience. Any other flag so displayed should be placed on the left of the clergyman or speaker or to the right of the audience.
- M. The flag should form a distinctive feature of the ceremony of unveiling, a statue or monument, but it should never be used as the covering for the statue or the monument.
- N. The flag, when flown at half-staff, should be first hoisted to the peak of an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The flag should be again raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day. On Memorial Day the flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon only, then raised to the top of the staff. By order of the President, the flag shall be flown at Half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of a State, territory of possession, as a mark of respect to their memory. In the event of the death of other officials or foreign dignitaries, the flag is to be displayed at half-staff according to presidential instructions or



orders, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with the law. In the event of death of a present or former official of the Government of any state, territory or possession of the United States, the Governor of that State, territory or possession may proclaim that the National flag shall be flown at half-staff. The flag shall be flown at half-staff thirty days from the death of the President or a former President; ten days from the death of a Vice President, the Chief of Justice or a retired Chief of Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives; from the day of death until Interment of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court; a Secretary of an executive or military department, a former Vice President, or the Governor of the State, territory or possession; and on the day of death and the following day for a member of congress. As used in this subsection,

1. The term "half-staff" means the position of the flag when it is one-half the distance between the top and bottom of the staff;

2. The term "executive or military department" means any agency listed under Sections 101 and 102 of Title 5, United States Code; and

3. The term "Member of Congress" means Senator, a Representative, a Delegate, or the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico.

O. When the flag is used to cover a casket, it should be so placed that the union is at the head and over the left shoulder. The flag should not be lowered in the grave or allowed to touch the ground.

P. When the flag is suspended across the corridor or lobby in a building with only one main entrance, it should be suspended vertically with the union to the observer's left upon entering. If the building has more than one main entrance the flag should be suspended vertically near the center of the corridor or lobby with the union to the north, when entrances are to the east and west, or to the east when entrances are to the north and south. If there are entrances in more than two directions, the union should be to the east.

#### **Section 4**

That no disrespect should be shown to the flag of United States of America; the flag should not be dipped to any person or thing. Regimental colors state flags and organizations or institutional flags are to be dipped as mark of honor.

A. The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property.

B. The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water or merchandise.

C. The flag should never be carried flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free.

D. The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding, or drapery. It should never be festooned, drawn back, nor up, in folds, but always allowed to fall free. Bunting of blue, white and red, always arranged with the blue above, the white in the middle and red below, should be used for covering a speaker's desk, draping the front of the platform, and for decoration in general.

E. The flag should never be fastened, displayed, used or stored in such manner as to permit it to be easily torn, soiled or damaged in any way.

F. The flag should never be used as a covering for a ceiling.

G. The flag should never have been placed upon it, nor on any part of it, nor attached to it any mark, insignia, letter, word, figure, design, picture or drawing of any nature.

H. The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying or delivering anything.

I. The flag should never be used for advertising purpose in any manner whatsoever. It should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs and the like, printed or impressed on paper napkins or boxes or anything that is designed for temporary use and discard. Advertising should not be fastened to a staff or halyard from which the flag is flown.

J. No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform. However, a flag patch may be affixed to the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen and members of patriotic organizations, The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing. Therefore, the lapel flag pin being a replica should be worn on the left lapel near the heart.

K. The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem or display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.

- **Section 5**

During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, all persons present except those in uniform should face the flag and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart. Those present in uniform should render the military salute. When not in uniform, men should remove the headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Aliens should stand at attention. The salute to the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.

### **Section 6**

During the rendition of the national anthem when the flag is displayed, all present except those in uniform shall stand at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. Men not in uniform should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should render the military salute at the first note of the anthem and retain this position until the last note. When the flag is not displayed, those present should face toward the music and act in the manner they would if the flag were displayed there.

### **Section 7**

The pledge of allegiance to the flag, " I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform men should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute.

### **Section 8**

Any rule or custom pertaining to the display of the flag of the United States of America, set forth herein. May be prescribed, modified or repealed, or additional rules with respect thereto may be prescribed, by the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, whenever he deems it to be appropriate or desirable; and any such alteration or additional rule shall be set forth in proclamation. No person shall display the flag of the United Nations or any other national or international flag equal, above or in a position of superior prominence or honor to, in place of, the flag of the United States at any place within the United States or any Territory or possession thereof: Provided, that nothing in this section

shall make unlawful the continuance of the practice heretofore followed of displaying the flag of the United Nations in a position of superior prominence of honor, and other national flags in positions of equal prominence or honor, with that of the flag of the United States at the headquarters of the United Nations.

## **Section 9**

During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, all persons present except those in uniform should face the flag and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart. Those present in uniform should render the military salute. When not in uniform, men should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Aliens should stand at attention. The salute to the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.