

A Compilation of U.S. Flag Information, Etiquette, and Ceremonies

***Compiled by Danni Altman
Woodbadge Course C-45-05***

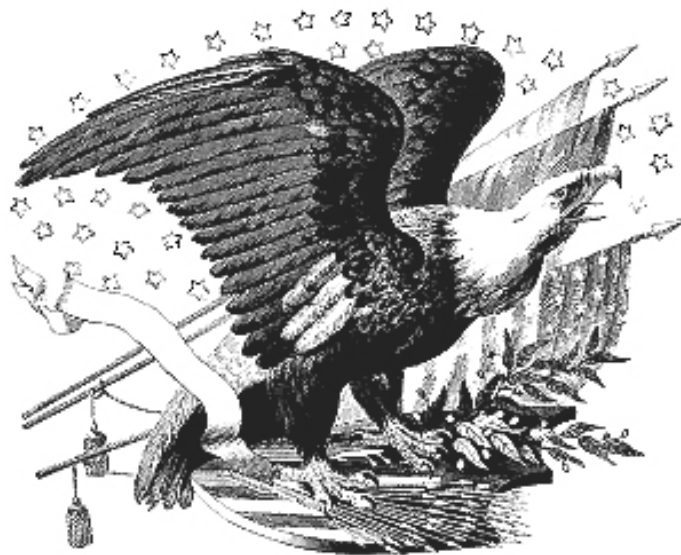


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United States Code Title 4

Chapter 1 - The Flag



§ 1. **Flag; stripes and stars on**

The flag of the United States shall be thirteen horizontal stripes, alternate red and white; and the union of the flag shall be forty-eight stars, white in a blue field.

§ 2. **Same; additional stars**

On the admission of a new State into the Union one star shall be added to the union of the flag; and such addition shall take effect on the fourth day of July then next succeeding such admission.

§ 3. **Use of flag for advertising purposes; mutilation of flag**

Any person, who within the District of Columbia, in any manner, for exhibition or display, shall place or cause to be placed any word, figure, mark, picture, design, drawing, or any advertisement of any nature upon any flag, standard, colors, or ensign of the United States of America; or shall expose or cause to be exposed to public view any such flag, standard, colors, or ensign upon which shall have been printed, painted, or otherwise placed, or to which shall be attached, appended, affixed, or annexed in any word, figure, mark, picture, design, or drawing, or any advertisement of any nature; or who, within the District of Columbia, shall manufacture, sell, expose for sale, or to public view, or give away or have in possession for sale, or to be given away or for use for any purpose, any article or substance being an article of merchandise, or a receptacle for merchandise or article or thing for carrying or transporting merchandise, upon which shall have been printed, painted, attached, or otherwise placed a representation of any such flag, standard, colors, or ensign, to advertise, call attention to, decorate, mark, or distinguish the article or substance on which so placed shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$100 or by imprisonment for not more than thirty days, or both, in the discretion of the court. The words "flag, standard, colors, or ensign", as used herein, shall include any flag, standard, colors, ensign, or any picture or representation of either, or of any part or parts of either, made of any substance or represented on any substance, of any size evidently purporting to be either of said flag, standard, colors, or ensign of the United States of America or a picture or a representation of either, upon which shall be shown the colors, the stars and stripes, in any number of either thereof, or of any part or parts of either, by which the average person seeing the same without deliberation may believe the same to represent the flag, colors, standard, or ensign of the United States of America.

§ 4. **Pledge of allegiance to the flag; manner of delivery**

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 any non-religious 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.

§ 5. Display and use of the flag by civilians; codification of rules and customs; definition

The following codification of existing rules and customs pertaining to the display and use of the flag of the United States of America is 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 the purpose of this chapter shall be defined according to sections 1 and 2 of this title and Executive Order 10384 issued pursuant thereto.

§ 6. Time and occasions for display

(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 24 hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.

(b) The flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously.

(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; Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, third Monday in January; 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.

§ 7. Position and manner of display

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 (i) of this section.

(b) The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides, or back of a vehicle or of a

railroad train or a 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. 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, or 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 or 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.

(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 staff 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.

(f) 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. 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.

(g) 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.

(h) When the flag of the United States is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from the window sill, 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.

(i) 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.

(j) 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 and south street.

(k) When used on a speaker's platform, the flag, if 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.

(l) 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 monument.

(m) 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. 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, 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 law. In the event of the 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 30 days from the death of the President or a former President; 10 days from the day of death of the Vice President, the Chief Justice or a retired Chief 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 a State, territory, or possession; and on the day of death and the following day for a Member of Congress. The flag shall be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day, unless that day is also Armed Forces Day. 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 a Senator, a Representative, a Delegate, or the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico.

(n) 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 into the grave or allowed to touch the ground.

(o) When the flag is suspended across a corridor or lobby in a building with only one main entrance, it should be suspended vertically with the union of the flag 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.

§ 8. Respect for flag

No disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United States of America; the flag should not be dipped to any person or thing. Regimental colors, State flags, and organization or institutional flags are to be dipped as a 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 the 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 a 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 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 purposes in any manner whatsoever. It should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs and the like, printed or otherwise impressed on paper napkins or boxes or anything that is designed for temporary use and discard. Advertising signs 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 label 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 for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.

§ 9. Conduct during hoisting, lowering or passing of flag

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.

§ 10. Modification of rules and customs by President

Any rule or custom pertaining to the display of the flag of the United States of America, set forth herein, may be altered, 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 a proclamation.

(From the U.S. House of Representatives Downloadable U.S. Code: http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/Title_04.txt)



United States Code Title 36

Chapter 3 - National Anthem, Motto, Floral Emblem, and March

§ 301. National anthem; Star-Spangled Banner

(a) The composition consisting of the words and music known as The Star-Spangled Banner is designated the national anthem of the United States of America.

(b) Conduct during playing - During rendition of the national anthem -

1. when the flag is displayed -

A. all present except those in uniform should stand at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart;

B. men not in uniform should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold the headdress at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart; and

C. individuals in uniform should give the military salute at the first note of the anthem and maintain that position until the last note; and

2. when the flag is not displayed, all present should face toward the music and act in the same manner they would if the flag were displayed.

§ 302. National motto

“In God we trust” is the national motto

§ 303. National floral emblem

The flower commonly known as the rose is the national floral emblem

§ 304. National march

The composition by John Phillip Sousa entitled “The Stars and Stripes Forever” is the national march.

(From the U.S. House of Representatives Downloadable U.S. Code: <http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/36C3.txt>)



How to Display the Flag



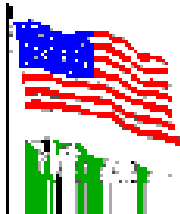
1. When the flag is displayed over the middle of the street, it should be suspended vertically with the union to the north in an east and west street or to the east in a north and south street.



2. 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 [*that means the viewer's left --Webmaster*], and its staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag.



3. 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. By "half-staff" is meant lowering the flag to one-half the distance between the top and bottom of the staff. Crepe streamers may be affixed to spear heads or flagstuffs in a parade only by order of the President of the United States.



4. 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. 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 right of the flag of the United States (the viewer's left). When the flag is half-masted, both flags are half-masted, with the US flag at the mid-point and the other flag below.



5. 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.



6. When the flag of the United States is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from the window sill, 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.



7. 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 into the grave or allowed to touch the ground.

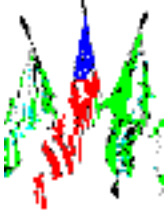


8. When the flag is displayed in a manner other than by being flown from a staff, it should be displayed flat, whether indoors or out. When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union

should be uppermost and to the flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left. When displayed in a window it should be displayed in the same way, that is with the union or blue field to the left of the observer in the street. When festoons, rosettes or drapings are desired, bunting of blue, white and red should be used, but never the flag.



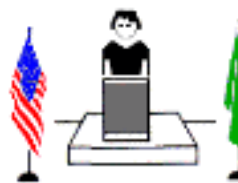
9. That the flag, when carried in a procession with another flag, or flags, should be either on the marching right; that is, the flag's own right, or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.



10. 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 pen-nants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs.



11. 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 approxi-mately equal size. International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another nation in time of peace.



12. When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium on or off a podium, 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 (to the right of the audience).



13. When the flag is displayed on a car, the staff shall be fixed firmly to the chassis or clamped to the right fender.



14. When hung in a window where it is viewed from the street, place the union at the head and over the left shoulder.

(From <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy>)



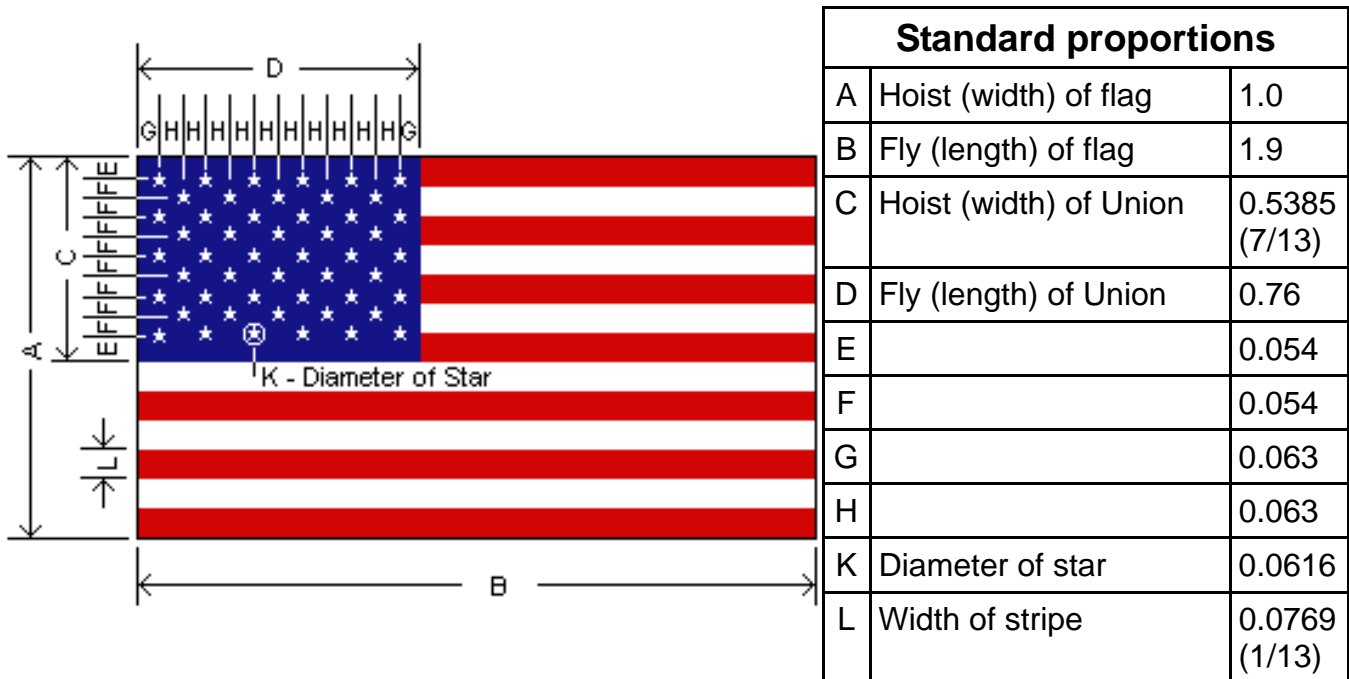
Did You Know?

America's largest flag is 255 feet by 505 feet and requires hundreds of people to unfurl the flag and keep it off the ground.



Flag Proportions

According to Executive Order 10834, official flags (not personal flags) must meet these standards:



Flagpoles and Flag Sizes

The usual size of a flag used at home is 3'x5'. A casket flag is 9'x5-1/2'. The table below shows the appropriate size flag to fly on flagpoles of several heights:

Home Use		Public Display (not home-use)			
Flagpole	Flag	Flagpole	Flag	Flagpole	Flag
15'	3'x5'	20'	4'x6'	50'	8x12'-10x15'
20'	3'x5'	25'	5'x8'	60'-65'	10'x15'-10'x19'
25'	4'x6'	30'-35'	6'x10'	70'-80'	10'x19'-12'x18'
		40'-45'	6'x10'-8'x12'	90'-100'	20'x38'-30'x50'

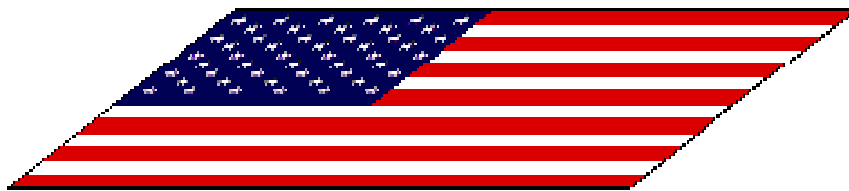
(Betsy Ross website, <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/flagetiq.html>)



Flag Folding Procedures

United States Flag

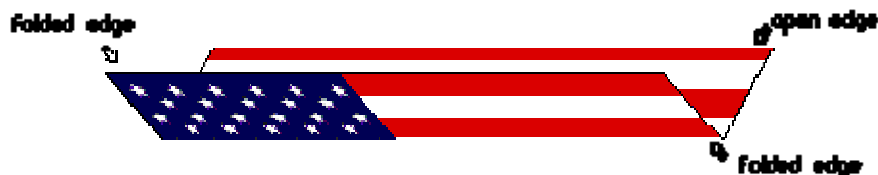
1. Begin by holding it waist-high with another Scout so that its surface is parallel to the ground. The other two Scouts will stand on the sides of the flag to ensure it remains tight as it is folded. The flagbearer will hold the Union (stars) in his/her left hand. The flag is “tabled” twice before folding.



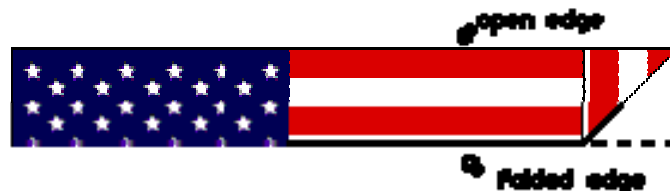
2. Fold the lower half of the stripe section lengthwise over the field of stars, holding the bottom and top edges securely.



3. Fold the flag again lengthwise with the blue field on the outside.



4. Make a triangular fold by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to meet the open (top) edge of the flag. The folding is done from the folder's right to left on the initial fold.



5. Turn the outer (end) point inward, parallel to the open edge, to form a second triangle.



6. The triangular folding is continued until the entire length of the flag is folded in this manner.



7. When the flag is completely folded, only a triangular blue field of stars should be visible.



(From <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy> - provided by Scoutmaster Larry Perkins)



Did You Know?

The flag of the United States was first adopted by resolution of the Continental Congress, June 14, 1777. This 13-star, 13-stripe design remained in effect until 1795, when two additional stars and stripes were added to mark the admission to the Union of Vermont and Kentucky. From that point on, it was unchanged, despite the admission of further states, until 1818, when the number had reached 20. After much debate, Congress decided to abandon the idea of adding a stripe for each new state and instead adopted the law that determines the design of the flag today.

Vexillology is the scientific study of flags and related emblems. It is concerned with research into flags of all kinds, both modern and historical, the creation of a body of practice for flag design and usage, and of a body of theory of flag development. Vexillology seeks to understand and explain the important part played by flags in the modern world. A Vexiologist is a person who studies the flag.

Vexillology as a word is derived from the Latin vexillum, a term used by the Romans to refer to a kind of standard with a fabric hung from a horizontal crossbar on a pole. It is the nearest equivalent in the classical languages to what we call a flag today.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When was the Flag Code established?

A: The American Legion has been promoting flag etiquette since its founding in 1919. The Veterans of Foreign Wars has long advocated proper respect for the flag. In 1942, the Flag Code was established by Congress. It has been periodically updated.

Q: Why is the flag sometimes called the “colors”?

A: In formal and military contexts, the American flag is called different things depending on where or how it is displayed. For example, it is called an ensign when it is displayed on a vessel. It is called “Colors” when it is carried by foot, as by the infantry. It is called “Standard” when it is displayed on a car or an aircraft, and by the cavalry.



Q: Is it appropriate to fly a flag that has fewer than 50 stars?

A: Yes. Historic American flags are still considered living, active flags.

Q: What do the colors red, white and blue of the American flag symbolize?

A: The Continental Congress left no record to show why it chose the colors. However, in 1782, the Congress of the Confederation chose these same colors for the Great Seal of the United States and listed their meaning as follows: white to mean purity and innocence, red for valor and hardiness, and blue for vigilance, perseverance, and justice. According to legend, George Washington interpreted the elements of the flag this way: the stars were taken from the sky, the red from the British colors, and the white stripes signified the secession from the home country. However, there is no official designation or meaning for the colors of the flag.

Q: What is the meaning of the folds in a flag-folding ceremony?

A: There is no reference to meaning of the folds in the Flag Code. There is a popular but unauthorized flag-folding ceremony that cannot be used in government ceremonies, but can be used in private ceremonies. The script of this flag-folding ceremony is included later in this booklet.

Q: What does the fringe on the flag represent?

A: The gold trim is found on ceremonial flags used indoors and for outdoor ceremonies. The fringe is considered completely within the guidelines or proper flag etiquette. There is nothing in the Flag Code about the fringe being for federal government flags only. The Internet contains many sites that claim that the fringe indicates martial law or that the Constitution does not apply in that area. These are entirely unfounded (usually citing Executive Order 10834 and inventing text that is not part of the order) and should be dismissed as urban legends.

Q: Do I have to fold my flag in the triangular fold for storage between use?

A: You may use the ordinary rectangular fold and, perhaps, place your flag in a plastic bag, for storage. The triangular fold is not required, but is traditional. Instructions for the triangular fold are provided under the “Flag Folding Procedures” header in this booklet. Before folding the flag, either way, be sure it is dry and clean.

Q: We recently received a notice from our home owners association that no flags - including the American flag - may be flown in any way from our homes.

A: This has been a frequent problem. There is now a law protecting your right to fly the U.S. flag.

“A condominium association, cooperative association, or residential real estate management association may not adopt or enforce any policy, or enter into any agreement, that would restrict or prevent a member of the association from displaying the flag of the United States on residential property within the association with respect to which such member has a separate ownership interest or a right to exclusive possession or use.”

Q: Should I fly my flag at half-staff today?

A: The flag may be flown at half staff by Presidential proclamation or by your state governor. On Memorial Day the flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon. Your flag can be flown at half-staff upon reliable information that a past or present President or Vice-President has died (see subsection 7(m) of the Flag Code). By statute, the President is requested to issue each year a proclamation requiring government buildings to half-staff the flag and inviting all the people of the U.S. to do so as well, on the following days: May 15, Peace Officers Memorial Day; September 11, Patriot Day; December 7, National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

Q: When the U.S. flag is at half-mast, should other flags (state, city, company) be flown at half-mast?

A: Yes, they should. See section 7(f) of the Flag Code for more information.

Q: Can the U.S. flag be flown at half-staff and the state flag be flown underneath of it on the same pole?

A: Yes. The U.S. flag should be at a point midway on the pole and the state flag should fly beneath it.

Q: Is there a difference between “half-mast” and “half-staff”?

A: Several dictionaries agree that the principal term is half-mast. The Flag Code (section 7m) reads: “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;” General conclusion is that both terms can be used. The term “half-mast” seems more appropriate at sea, and is preferred by dictionaries. The term “half-staff” seems more appropriate on land, and is the term used in the Flag Code and in Presidential proclamations.

Q: Upon the death of a sitting or former President how long does the flag fly at half-mast? For a Vice-President?

A: 30 days for the death of a sitting or former President. 10 days for the death of a Vice-President. More information can be found in section 7(m) of the Flag Code.

Q: Where should the flag be mounted as it relates to the front of a house?

A: It is traditionally flown either to the right or the left of the front door. It can be on either side. When there is a choice, find a position of prominence. Sometimes that is the left of the door, sometimes the right, sometimes away from the door, but centered on the house (when you have a porch, for example). Use your best judgment to find a nice position for the flag. However, if you fly a second flag, then the U.S. flag must be on the viewer’s left of the other flag, as you approach the house.



Flag Ceremonies

STANDARD INDOOR FLAG CEREMONY

Preparation: Put flag stands in place at the front of the room. Looking to the front, the U.S. flag stand is on the left. Flag guards are in the back of the room holding the flag. They have already checked to make sure that the flags fit in the flag holders and that the flags clear the ceiling.

Personnel: Narrator and color guard

Materials: U.S. flag and a pack flag

Presentation of Colors – Indoors

Narrator: Will the audience please rise? (*Pause.*) Scouts attention. Color Guard attention. Color Guard, prepare to present the colors.

The color guard waits in the back of the room for the audience to stand and become quiet.

Narrator: Color guard, advance.

The pack flag guards and bearer are on the left, and the U.S. flag guards and bearer are on the right. With the U.S. flag in the lead, they walk in and cross so that the U.S. flag will be on the left side of the room when you look toward the front. The bearers and guards take their positions near the flag stands, facing the audience and holding the flags vertically.

Hand salute. - everyone, with the exception of the flag bearers and guards, salutes.

Narrator: Scout salute. Please join with me in saying the Pledge of Allegiance. (*All join in.*)

The bearers and guards stand at attention and continue to hold the flags. The pack flag is lowered slightly so that the U.S. flag stands taller. The U.S. flag guards and bearer and pack flag guards and bearer do not salute or say the Pledge of Allegiance.

Narrator: Two.

The pack drops its salute. The pack flag is raised to its vertical position again.

Narrator: Color guard, post the colors.

The pack flag is placed in its stand. Its guards and bearer step back into place. The U.S. flag is then posted. Its guards and bearer salute it and step back into place.

Narrator: Color guard, dismissed.

The U.S. flag guard leads the procession to the back of the room with the narrator following last.

Comments:

When the U.S. flag is carried with another banner (such as the pack flag), it should always be on "its marching right" in the procession.

If there is only a narrow aisle, the procession follows this order in single file: U.S. flag guard, U.S. flag bearer, pack flag bearer, pack flag guard.

Retiring of Colors – Indoors

Narrator: Will the audience please rise? (*Pause.*)

The color guard waits in the back of the room for the audience to rise and become quiet.

Narrator: Color guard, advance.

The U.S. flag guard and bearer and pack flag guard and bearer walk down the aisle and to the flags. They stand behind the flags, facing the audience.

Narrator: Color guard, salute.

The guards and bearers salute.

Narrator: Color guard, retire the colors.

The U.S. flag is removed first (just slightly ahead of the pack flag).

Hand salute. Everyone, with the exception of the guards and bearers, salutes. The U.S. flag stays on its "marching right" as the guards and bearers proceed down the aisle to the rear of the room.

Narrator: Two.

Everyone drops the salute.

Did You Know?

Until the Executive Order of June 24, 1912, neither the order of the stars nor the proportions of the flag was prescribed. Consequently, flags dating before this period sometimes show unusual arrangements of the stars and odd proportions, these features being left to the discretion of the flag maker. In general, however, straight rows of stars and proportions similar to those later adopted officially were used.

What follows is an unofficial, but popular script for folding the flag. It does not appear in the Flag Code and would appear to be in violation of military guidelines, in violation of the Establishment Clause. The Establishment Clause requires that expression not create the reasonable impression that the government is sponsoring, endorsing, or inhibiting religion generally, or favoring or disfavoring a particular religion. There are numerous variations to be found circulating online and in newsgroups and e-mails. There has been no success in discovering its origin or authorship.

FLAG FOLDING CEREMONY

The flag folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our country was originally founded. The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing the states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted when draped as a pall on a casket of a veteran who has served our country in uniform.

In the Armed Forces of the United States, at the ceremony of retreat the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle fold and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to our nation's honored dead. The next morning it is brought out and, at the ceremony of reveille, run aloft as a symbol of our belief in the resurrection of the body.

(Wait for the Honor Guard or Flag Detail to unravel and fold the flag into a quarter fold - resume reading when Honor Guard is standing ready.)

1. The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.
2. The second fold is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life.
3. The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain a peace throughout the world.
4. The fourth fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance.
5. The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."
6. The sixth fold is for where our hearts life. It is with our heart that we 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.
7. The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.
8. The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.
9. The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood; for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty

and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.

10. The tenth fold is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.

11. The eleventh fold, in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies, in their eyes the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

12. The twelfth fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God we Trust."

(Wait for the Honor Guard or Flag Detail to inspect the flag - after the inspection, resume reading.)

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington and the sailors and marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today.

Flag Folding from the Sons of the American Revolution

A properly proportioned flag will fold 13 times on the triangles, representing the 13 original Colonies. When finally complete the triangular folded flag is emblematic of the tri-corner hat worn by the Patriots of the American Revolution. When folded no red or white stripe is to be evident leaving only the honor field of blue and stars.

Did You Know?

The United States Army Institute of Heraldry has plans for flags with up to 56 stars using a similar staggered star arrangement in case additional states accede.

The five-pointed star, used on the American Flag, was relatively rare until its use in 1777. It has since been used on many flags around the world.

On Memorial Day, it is proper to fly the flag at half-staff until noon in honor of America's fallen service men and women.

The original "Star-Spangled Banner," that flew over Fort McHenry, was made by Mary Pickersgill of Baltimore, Maryland in 1813. It measured 30 by 42 feet and she was paid \$405.90 for her efforts.



Flag Retirement Ceremonies

NOTES: A flag should never be torn up like an old bed sheet. It should be cut up with scissors or shears in a methodical manner. The blue field of the flag is never cut as it represents the union of the fifty states and one should never let the union be broken. A flag ceases to be a flag when it is cut into pieces.

The flag dissection can either be done in advance or at the ceremony. When it is done at the ceremony, one or more Scouts should start and tend a medium size, wood fire. Once the flag remnants and fire are ready, one of the following ceremonies can be performed. The Scouts maintain a vigil over the fire until all traces of the flag remnants are destroyed. Then the fire is extinguished and the ashes are buried. The burial can be completed with a moment of silence while taps is played by a bugler.

Information about a flag that has been accepted for retirement can be incorporated into the flag ceremony (if this is of interest questions such as where has the flag flown, how long has it flown, memorable events that happened at the flag site should be asked at the time of accepting the flag for retirement).

Flag Retirement Ceremony

The U.S. flag should be disposed of by burning when it becomes tattered or worn, beyond reasonable repair.

Here are the basics for a flag retirement ceremony. Appropriate songs and/or readings may be added. This is a solemn ceremony. It should be done with reverence and in quiet, except for the speakers. The fire should have glowing embers, not a roaring fire as too high of a fire will carry pieces of unburned flag material into the air.

1. Lower the colors or unfold the flag.
2. Place the stars (as the audience sees them) in the upper left-hand corner. This is an appropriate reading to start the ceremony: "Remember as you look at the flag, it is the symbol of our nation, it is red because of human sacrifice; blue because of the true blue loyalty of its defenders; and white symbolizes liberty - our land of the free. The stars are symbols of the united efforts and hope in the hearts of the many people striving to keep America great."
3. Cut the field of blue from the stripes - have someone hold onto this piece.
4. Next, cut each stripe from the "whole" and lay each piece, one at a time, across the flames. These are some ideas for appropriate readings for each stripe:

First stripe - "The thirteen stripes stand for the thirteen original colonies, which are Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island."

Second stripe - "The white stands for purity."

Third stripe - "The red stands for courage."

Fourth stripe - "Give me liberty or give me death."

Fifth stripe - "One if by land, two if by sea."

Sixth stripe - We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution on the United States of America."

Seventh stripe - "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal.

Seventh stripe - "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal. Their creator endows them with certain unalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Eighth stripe - "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Ninth stripe - "Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or press."

Tenth stripe - "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Eleventh stripe - "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

Twelfth stripe - "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

Thirteenth stripe - "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Each state is being represented by a star on a field of blue, which signifies a new constellation being formed.

As we place it into the fire, let it burn brightly and remind us how truly our flag represents our country.

Will you please join us in saying the Pledge of Allegiance and sing The Star Spangled Banner and then Taps.

After all the stripes have been burned, the field of blue is laid on the fire - all are silent until the entire piece burns to ash. Out of respect nothing should ever be added to the ceremonial fire after the flag has been retired. The ceremony ends with everyone departing in silence. After the ashes have cooled, they should be buried.

Retiring of an American Flag

The flag of the United States of America is an honored symbol of our nation's unity, it's hopes, it's achievements, it's glory and it's high resolve.

When the flag is in such condition, through wear or damage, that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, it shall be destroyed in a dignified manner befitting such a symbol. The traditional way is to cut the flag into pieces and burn it in a modest but blazing fire. As we perform this respected duty, let us reflect on the design and meaning of our flag.

The Blue field or union is the point of honor, the upper corner of the Flag's own right. The symbolism of the right hand goes far back in antiquity when it was the weapon hand. Raising the right arm free of any weapon meant peace. It became a salute, a way of giving praise and honor. The union is blue, representing the night sky with stars forming a new and glorious constellation. There is one star for each state in our union. It is said the point of honor of our flag was made from the blue cloak belonging to a captain in the Continental Army.

The stripes are symbolic of beams of morning light, rays emanating from the sun. Thirteen red and white stripes, one for each of the original thirteen colonies. The stripes in our flag were inspired by the rattlesnake flag flown on the ships of the Continental Fleet and the striped banner of the Sons of Liberty. Though the pattern has changed, the bars of shining red and gleaming white have remained. The stripes are alternating, seven red and six white. The red standing for courage and the blood of those brave men and women who fought and died to establish and preserve our republic; the white representing the purity and high moral resolve on which our country was founded.

The blue of a captain's cloak, the white of a soldier's shirt, the red from a flannel petticoat of a patriot's wife...this was our flag. This is the flag that stands for honor - your's and mine.

As the fire consumes the worn and tattered material in it's purifying flame, let us remember the words of George Washington when the Star-Spangled Banner was first flown by the Continental Army: "We take the stars from the heaven and the red from our mother country. We separate the red by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing liberty." Thus the Stars and Stripes became what it is; born amid the strife of battle, it has become the standard around which a free people have fought to preserve the greatest nation in the world.

<http://usscouts.org/usscouts/ceremony/flagret2.html>

Did You Know?

There is a tradition to bury a war veteran with a small flag or should it be requested, it is proper for a veteran to be buried with his or her body wrapped in the flag. Further, it is also appropriate for any patriotic person to make and be granted the same honor of having a flag drape the coffin and to be buried with the body wrapped in the flag.

The Flag Code does not prohibit any individual from having the flag draped across a coffin. The deceased does not have to be a veteran to have the flag draped on their coffin.

REFERENCES

Thanks to the Betsy Ross Homepage, on USHistory.org for permission in using the wonderful flag etiquette and FAQ which was found on their website:

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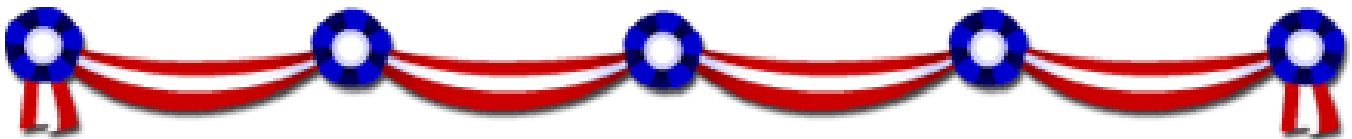
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Flag Retiring Ceremonies provided courtesy of <http://usscouts.org/usscouts/ceremony/flagret2.html>

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Standard Indoor Flag Ceremony provided courtesy of www.pack166.org/flag_ceremonies.htm

Pictures provided courtesy of the Just A Touch Art Studio of Jonesboro, Georgia;
www.justatouch.com



Did You Know?

America's tallest flagpole is located three miles south of the California -- Oregon border in sunny Dorris, California. It is approx. 200 feet tall, weighs 35,000 pounds and is 36" in diameter at the base and 5.6" at the top. This pole is designed to be a free-standing pole. Free-standing means that pole is not connected to guy wires or any tower-type structure but, instead, is buried in sand which is encased in a concrete anchor (much like a flower pot holds a plant).

The Flag will be lighted for night viewing by way of three high-intensity, pencil beam lights, and features an internal halyard and electric winch to assist in the raising and lowering of the flag. The Flag, is 30' X 60' Duralite nylon and exerts a force of 1,080 pounds at designed winds of 100 to 130 mph.