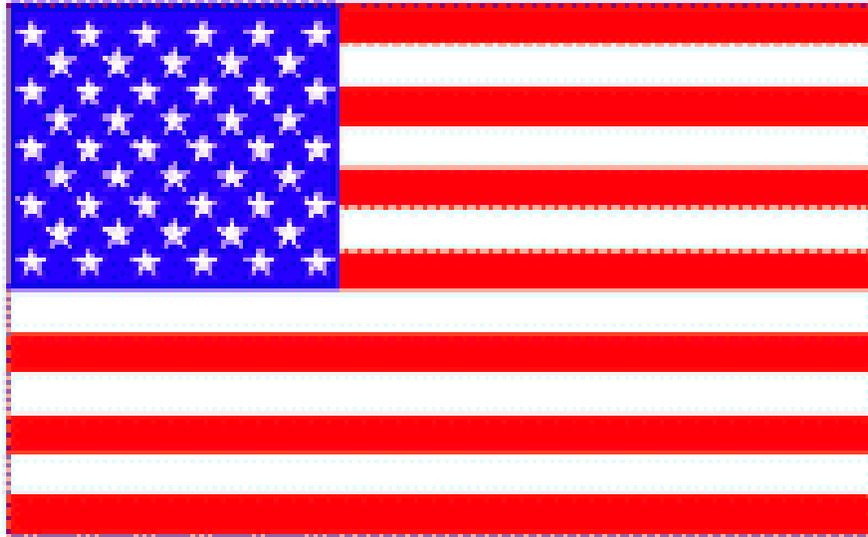


Flag Rules and Regulations

source: <http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/flageti.html>



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Flag Folding Procedures

United States Flag

1. Begin by holding it waist-high with another cadet so that its surface is parallel to the ground. The other two cadets 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.
-

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.



States.

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 flagstaffs in a parade only by order of the President of the United



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.



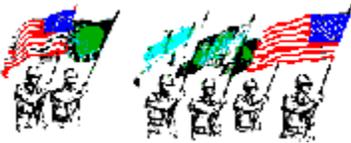
6. When the flag of the United States is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from the window sill, balcony, or front of a building, the union of the flag should be placed at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half-staff.



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.



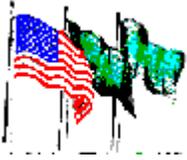
8. When the flag is displayed in a manner other than by being flown from a staff, it should be displayed flat, whether indoors or out. When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be uppermost and to the flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left. When displayed 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.



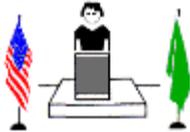
9. That the flag, when carried in a procession with another flag, or flags, should be either on the marching right; that is, the flag's own right, or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.



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 pennants 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 approximately equal size. International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another nation in time of peace. The order of precedence for flags generally is National flags (US first, then others in alphabetical order in English), State (host state first, then others in the order of admission) and territories (Washington DC, Puerto Rico, etc.), Military (in order of establishment: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard), then other.



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). Please note that the old guidelines differed from this updated and simplified one.



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, place the blue union in the upper left, as viewed from the street.

Flag Code Violations in the News



"Deal or No Deal," the television game show, on Monday, February 12, 2007, featured a flag-shirted contestant. Section 8d. reads, "The flag should never be used as wearing apparel."



September 11, 2006, President Bush and first lady Laura Bush stand on a carpet of the American flag at Ground Zero in Manhattan, the site of the September 11, 2001 attack. Section 8b of the Flag Code reads, "The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground..." Click picture for enlargement. Photo credit: Reuters/Jason Reed



April 2006, protesters hold a US flag union down to protest pending federal legislation, in Costa Mesa, California. Section 8a. "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." Click picture for enlargement. Photo credit: AFP/Getty Images/David McNew



Super Bowl 2004, Janet Jackson's "costume malfunction" made international news; that same half-time show featured the wearing of an American flag by performer Kid Rock. He later removed the flag poncho and hurled it over his head. Section 8d. reads, "The flag should never be used as wearing apparel." Click picture for enlargement. Photo credit: Reuters



In July 2003 President Bush autographed a small flag. This picture was circulated across the Internet noting its violation of the Flag Code: "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." Click picture for enlargement. Photo credit: AP Photo/Charles Dharapak

Questions

- **My flag touched the ground. Do I need to destroy it?**

No. You should, of course, try to avoid having the flag touch the ground. But if it does, you should correct the situation immediately. If the flag has been dirtied, you should clean it by hand with a mild soap solution and dry it well before returning it to use.

- **My flag is old and ready to be retired. What should I do?**

Section 8k of the Flag Code (see below) states, "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." We recommend that you contact your local [VFW](#) Chapter and ask them for help properly disposing of your flag. And be sure to consider providing a small donation to them for their assistance. Or you can contact your local [Elks Lodge](#) (who created the idea of Flag Day, established officially by President Truman, himself a member of the Elks), the American Legion, or the Knights of Columbus. Some Boy Scout and Girl Scout troupes also can provide this service.

- **Are there penalties for violating the Flag Code?**

No. The Flag Code is intended as a guide to be followed on a purely voluntary basis to insure proper respect for the flag.

- **What do the colors red, white, and blue of the american flag symbolize?**

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.

- **Should the American flag be taken down during a rain storm?**

Most flags sold nowadays are all-weather flags (refer to the packaging). These are permitted to fly during inclement weather, according to the [Flag Code](#).

- **Is it proper to wash a soiled flag? May I mend a torn flag?**

If a flag is torn, it can be repaired, preferably by a professional or someone skilled in mending. If it is dirty, it can be washed, preferably by hand with a mild soap. If it is faded or tattered beyond repair, or dirty beyond cleaning, then it is time to replace the flag.

- **I fly my flag at home 24 hours a day. What does "properly illuminated" mean?**

Section 6a: " It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaffs 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 Rules offer no additional guidance on this question. We interpret this to mean that there should be either a light directly upon the flag or that there be sufficient local lighting to make the flag easily visible at night.

If you cannot "properly illuminate" your flag, we recommend that you retire it at sunset, as the Flag Rules specify.

There is some online discussion of changes to this rule following 9/11. There have been no changes to this rule.

What Is a Flag?

The flag of the United States is any flag of the United States, or any part thereof, made of any substance, of any size, accurate or not, that is recognized as a flag by the reasonable observer. Some argue that flags are only those items made for display as flags. However the flag code makes clear that the image of the flag sewn into fabric (as on T-shirts) or printed on paper are still considered flags: "... 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..." The pictures below are all recognized as flags.

Flag Code

The laws relating to the flag of the United States of America are found in detail in the United States Code. Title 4, Chapter 1 pertains to the flag; Title 18, Chapter 33, Section 700 regards criminal penalties for flag desecration; Title 36, Chapter 3 pertains to patriotic customs and observances. These laws were supplemented by Executive Orders and Presidential Proclamations.

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 *[Note that sec. 2 which follows provides for additional stars. Today the flag has fifty stars representing the fifty states — Webmaster]*, 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 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 the 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. [[See Congressional Notes re use of "under God."](#)]

§5. Display and use of 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 be, and it 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 the purpose 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.

§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 flagstaffs 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 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**
 - o New Year's Day, January 1**
 - o Inauguration Day, January 20**
 - o Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, third Monday in January**
 - o Lincoln's Birthday, February 12**
 - o Washington's Birthday, third Monday in February**
 - o Easter Sunday (variable)**
 - o Mother's Day, second Sunday in May**
 - o Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May**
 - o Memorial Day (half-staff until noon), the last Monday in May**
 - o Flag Day, June 14**
 - o 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 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 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

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 Philip Sousa entitled "The Stars and Stripes Forever" is the national march.