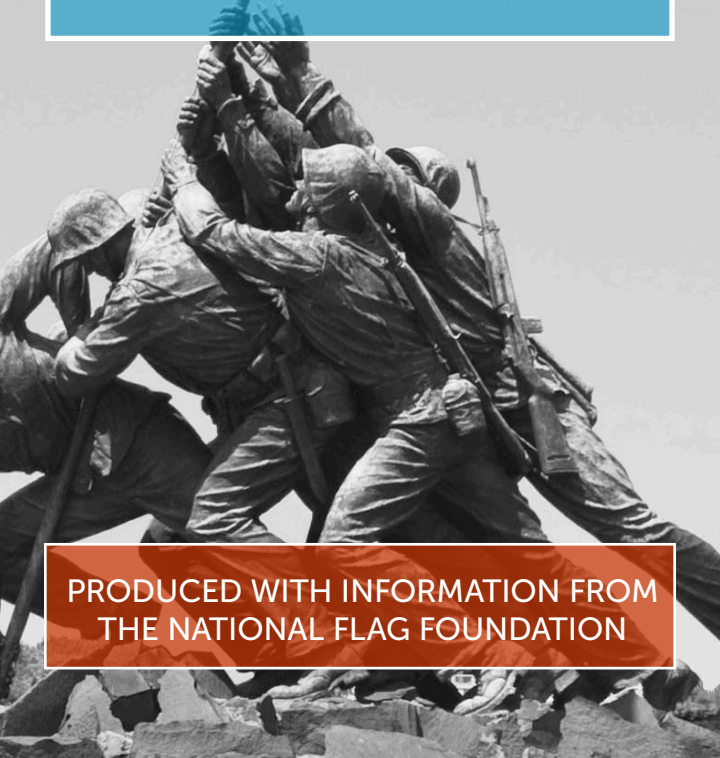




*our* **NATION'S**  
**FLAG**



PRODUCED WITH INFORMATION FROM  
THE NATIONAL FLAG FOUNDATION

## **AMERICA'S COUNTIES**

America's 3,069 county governments invest more than \$500 billion each year in local services and infrastructure and employ more than 3.3 million people. Most importantly, county governments are focused on the fundamental building blocks for healthy, vibrant and safe communities:

- Support and maintain public infrastructure, transportation and economic development assets
- Provide vital justice, law enforcement and public safety services
- Protect the public's health and well-being, and
- Implement a broad array of federal, state and local programs, and
- Maintain public records and coordinate elections

## **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**

The National Association of Counties (NACo) unites America's 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service.

## **NATIONAL FLAG FOUNDATION**

The information presented in this brochure is directly compiled with permission from guidelines and facts published through the National Flag Foundation, a nonprofit educational organization that answers questions concerning flag etiquette and protocol and encourages frequent and proper display and care of the United States flag.

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**GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT  
THE U.S. FLAG HERE:  
[WWW.NATIONALFLAGFOUNDATION.ORG](http://WWW.NATIONALFLAGFOUNDATION.ORG)**

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## INTRODUCTION

The flag of the United States is a living symbol that calls to our spirit, reminding us of the greatness of America. We cherish and uphold it because it is the standard of honor under which we live.

We view the flag with devotion, for it represents our national heritage of noble deeds, splendid accomplishment, and untold sacrifices which combined to establish the moral character of our country. It signifies a people dedicated to liberty, justice and freedom for all.

The customs and traditions which surround the display and use of our flag are guides to the means by which

**THE COLORS OF THE FLAG:  
RED IS FOR COURAGE  
WHITE IS FOR PURITY  
BLUE IS FOR LOYALTY**

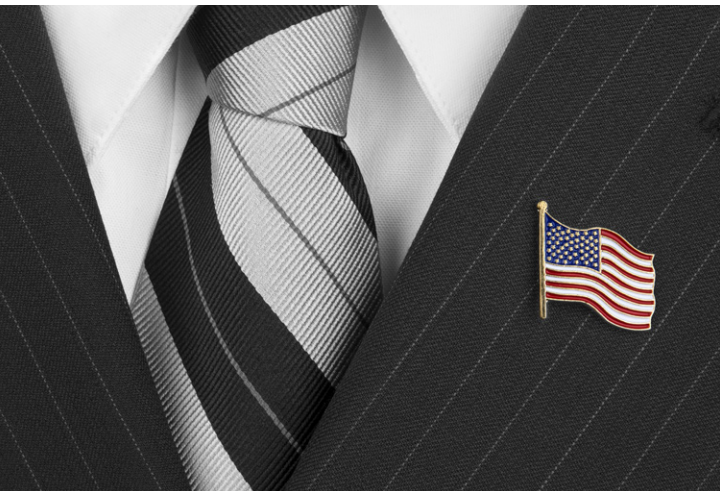
we as proud and grateful citizens may demonstrate the ultimate respect for the flag of our nation. In honoring and saluting our flag we demonstrate affection for our nation, fellow citizens and the proud future we share.

## THE U.S. FLAG CODE

The United States Flag Code, first adopted in 1924 and amended through the present, prescribes flag etiquette for a variety of circumstances ensuring that our national symbol is treated properly.

This brochure should not be treated as regulatory ... It is a guide for civilians and civilian groups who wish to properly honor the United States of America's principle emblem.

It should also be noted that each military branch has its own flag code of military etiquette; therefore, on matters concerning military flag etiquette, we recommend that you consult the specific branch code.



## CARE AND RESPECT

- The U.S. Flag should always be treated with the utmost care and respect. Remember, the flag represents a living country and, as such, is considered a living symbol.
- The Flag should never be dipped to any person or thing.
- Always display the flag with the blue union field up – never display the flag upside down, except as a signal of extreme distress.
- Always carry the flag aloft and free – never carry it flat or horizontally in processions or parades. The exception to this is carrying very large flags in a parade that are too big to be flown from a staff or pole.
- The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying or delivering anything.
- Always keep the flag clean. Keep it safe from those who would not respect it, or do not know enough to do so, such as young children.
- When the flag is lowered, no part of it should touch the ground or any other object.
- The flag should never be used for advertising purposes or printed on items designed for temporary use and discarded. It should not be used as part of a costume or athletic uniform.

## SALUTING THE FLAG

The U.S. Flag is saluted as it is hoisted and lowered. To salute, all persons not in uniform salute by placing their right hand over their heart, and men with head cover hold it to the left shoulder.

The salute is held until the flag is unsnapped from the flagstaff, or through the last note of the National Anthem, whichever is the longest.

The salute to a flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes. The members of organizations in formation should salute upon command from the person in charge.



**A FLAG DOES NOT NEED TO BE DESTROYED  
IF IT TOUCHES THE GROUND ... IT IS  
ACCEPTABLE TO WASH OR DRY CLEAN A  
FLAG WHEN IT GETS DIRTY.**

THE “RIGHT” AS THE POSITION OF HONOR WAS ESTABLISHED FROM THE TIME WHEN THE “RIGHT HAND” WAS THE “WEAPON HAND.” THE RIGHT HAND RAISED WITHOUT A WEAPON WAS A SIGN OF PEACE.



## DISPLAYING THE FLAG

The flag is a symbol of us all – of all America. It is not a political symbol. It is a symbol that each American should respect, for it represents the honor, courage and sacrifice of those who struggled to preserve the ideals upon which our country was founded: Freedom, justice and opportunity for all.

### ACROSS A STREET

When the flag is hung on a wire or cable across a street, it should be hung vertically with the union (stars) to the north or east.

If the flag is suspended over a sidewalk and hung from a wire extending from a structure to a pole at the outer edge of the sidewalk, the flag should be displayed with the union farthest from the building.



### FROM A STAFF

When the flag is displayed from a staff projecting from a window, balcony, or a building, the union should be at the peak of the staff.

### FLAGS ON VEHICLES

The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides, or back of a vehicle, a railroad train, or a boat. When the flag is displayed on a motorcar, the staff should be fixed firmly to the chassis or clamped to the right front fender. Thus it is recommended that the flag be attached to the right (passenger) side of a vehicle, and that the flag be removed from the vehicle at night since it cannot be properly illuminated.

### INDOOR DISPLAY

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.





**THE SAME FLAG THAT FLEW OVER PEARL HARBOR WAS FLOWN OVER THE WHITE HOUSE WHEN THE JAPANESE ACCEPTED TERMS OF SURRENDER ON AUGUST 14, 1945.**



## PARADES

The flag should be in front of the marchers. At the moment the flag passes in a parade or procession, all persons should show respect by standing at attention facing the flag with their right hand over their hearts. Military personnel or veterans should face the flag and render their military salute. Veterans may place their hand over their heart instead. During a parade it is appropriate to salute only the first US Flag. When other flags are included, the United States Flag should be centered in front of the others or carried to their right.

In a parade, passing review, color guard or any other setting, it is never appropriate to dip the American flag.

## PLATFORM OR FLOOR

When displayed on the floor or on a platform, the flag is given the place of honor, always positioned behind the speaker and to the speaker's right, and to the left of the audience. Other flags, if any, are positioned to the right of the U.S. Flag as seen by the audience.

If there is a flag at an exit of an assembly room, it should be placed to the left of the door, which positions it to the viewers left when leaving the room.



## ON THE WALL

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



## ILLUMINATION

If displayed at night, the flag must be properly illuminated. Proper illumination means that the stars and stripes can be seen readily from a reasonable distance.

Flags on poles generally require a dedicated light. Flags on a residential porch may require only ambient lighting, such as a porch or street light.

## WITH OTHER FLAGS

No other flag should be placed above the U.S. Flag with the following three exceptions:

- at the United Nations Headquarters where the United Nations Flag may be flown above flags of all nations; and
- during award ceremonies at the Olympic Games where it is a tradition that the flags of other nations may fly above the U.S. Flag.
- during Navy church services conducted by naval chaplains at sea, when the church pennant may be flown above the U.S. flag.

## GROUPED WITH OTHER FLAGS

When flown with flags of states, communities, or societies on separate and adjacent flagpoles that 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.

When flown on adjacent flagpoles with other flags, or pennants of states, communities or societies of the United States, the U.S. Flag is always the first flag to be raised and the last to be lowered.

When grouped in a semi-circle, the U.S. Flag should be at the center and at the highest point. The U.S. Flag is always the first flag raised and the last to be lowered.

## WITH FLAGS OF OTHER NATIONS

When national flags of other countries are flown in a group setting, each flag must be displayed from a separate pole of the same height. Each flag should be the same size or nearly so and arranged in alphabetical order to the left (observer's right) of the U.S. Flag. They should be raised and lowered simultaneously because the flag of one nation may not be displayed above that of another nation. The exception is at the United Nations Building in New York, where the U.N. Flag is flown above the flags of all nations.

## FLAGS ON A THE SAME POLE

When several flags are flown from the same flag pole, the U.S. Flag should always be at the top – with the exceptions listed on the previous page.

Flags of sovereign nations should not be flown on the same pole as the United States Flag but from separate poles.

The flag should be flown high enough that it can't be reached by people standing beneath it.

## CROSSED STAFFS

When another flag is displayed with the U.S. Flag and the staffs are crossed, the Flag of the United States is placed on its own right with its staff in front of that of the other flag.

## HANDLING THE FLAG

### RAISING AND LOWERING

The flag should be raised briskly and lowered slowly and ceremoniously.

### FOLDING THE FLAG

To properly fold the U.S. Flag, follow these steps:

1. Two people face each other, each holding one end of the flag. Stretch the flag horizontally at waist height and fold in half lengthwise.



2. Fold the flag in half lengthwise again; the union (stars) should be on the top.



3. One person holds the flag by the union while the other starts making triangular folds at the opposite end.



4. Continue to fold the flag in triangles from the stripes end until only the blue field with stars is showing.



**A FLAG EXPERT IS CALLED A “VEXILLOGIST.”**

**THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS ADOPTED THE  
FLAG ON JUNE 14, 1777. IT WAS NOT UNTIL  
1949 THAT PRESIDENT TRUMAN DECLARED  
JUNE 14 “FLAG DAY.”**



## DAY TO HONOR THE FLAG

The flag may be displayed from sunrise to sunset on all days, but especially on the following national and state holidays:

- New Year's Day – *January 1*
- Martin Luther King Day – *Third Monday in January*
- Inauguration Day – *January 20*
- Lincoln's Birthday – *February 12*
- Washington's Birthday – *Third Monday in February*
- Easter Sunday (*date varies*)
- Mother's Day – *Second Sunday in May*
- Peace Officers Memorial Day (half-staff) – *May 15*
- Armed Forces Day – *Third Saturday in May*
- Memorial Day (half-staff until noon) – *Last Monday in May*
- Flag Day – *June 14*
- Father's Day – *Third Sunday in June*
- Independence Day – *July 4*
- National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day – *July 27 (added January 6, 2009)*
- Labor Day – *First Monday in September*
- Patriot Day (half-staff) – *September 11*
- Constitution Day – *September 17*
- Gold Star Mothers Day – *Last Sunday in September*
- Firefighters Memorial Day (half-staff) – *Sunday before or on October 9th*
- Columbus Day – *Second Monday in October*
- Navy Day – *October 27*
- Election Day – *First Tuesday in November*
- Veterans Day – *November 11*
- Thanksgiving Day – *Fourth Thursday in November*
- Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (half-staff) – *December 7*
- Christmas Day – *December 25*
- *State Birthdays*
- *... and other days as may be proclaimed by the President of the United States.*

## HONORING WITH THE FLAG

### FUNERALS COVERING A CASKET

When used to cover a casket or coffin, the flag should be placed with the blue field covering the head and over the left shoulder. The flag should not be lowered into the grave or touch the ground at any time. The flag should never be used as the covering for a headstone or other statue or monument.

When taken from the casket, the flag should be formally and properly folded as a triangle with only the stars showing. Subsequently, the flag may be displayed in a storage case or it may be unfolded and flown.

### RETIRING THE FLAG

“The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem of display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.” (The United States Flag Code)

In many American communities, one or more organizations render an important community service by collecting and overseeing the proper disposal of old, worn, tattered, frayed and/or faded U.S. Flags.

For information on flag disposal in your community try the Boy Scouts of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, or the American Legion.

### MOURNING OR HALF-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 U.S. Presidential instructions, or in accordance with recognized customs.

In the event of the death of a present or former official of the government of any State, territory, or possession of the U.S., 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 for thirty days following the death of the President or a former President; ten days following 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.

To position the flag at half-staff, first raise the flag to the peak of the staff for an instant and then lower it to the half-staff position – roughly halfway between the top and bottom of the staff. Before lowering it for the day, raise the flag again to the peak of the pole for a moment.

These procedures pertain to government buildings; however, private citizens can follow them as well.

In a case where the flag is fixed to the pole (often in residential situations) it cannot be flown at half staff. In this instance, it is proper to attach two black ribbons to the end of the pole (not the flag) to show respect.



**FLYING THE FLAG AT HALF-MAST (OR HALF STAFF) BEGAN CENTURIES AGO, TO ALLOW “THE INVISIBLE FLAG OF DEATH” TO FLY AT THE TOP OF THE MAST.**



## THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was written to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus's voyage. The celebration plans resulted in Columbus Day being designated a holiday for the whole country by President Benjamin Harrison.

It should be recited by standing at attention, facing the flag, and saluting.

The original Pledge was written in August of 1882. The 23 words read as follows:

*"I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."*

A change was made to the Pledge in 1923. The original verse was changed from "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the republic. . ." to "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America."

In 1923, along with the word change, it was also decided that everyone should say the pledge with their right hands on their hearts. Then in 1954 Congress added "under God" to the Pledge. It was pointed out that Abraham Lincoln had called the United States "this nation under God" in "The Gettysburg Address."

In 1943 the Supreme Court of the United States decided that "No one – child or adult – could be forced to say 'The Pledge of Allegiance. To force someone to say it was in opposition to "freedom and justice for all."

*"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."*





### **SALUTING AT THE NATIONAL ANTHEM**

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.

## THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

### THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

The "Star Spangled Banner" was written in 1814 by Francis Scott Key and declared the national anthem in 1931 by an act of congress.



*Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light,  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming.  
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.  
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*







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