

Honor the Flag!

How to properly display
the American flag.



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How to Properly Display American Flag

The American flag is a solemn symbol of United States history. The 13 stripes representing the original colonies, and the blue canton containing 50 stars, one for each state, are a reminder of the liberties our forefathers fought so valiantly to gain, and what we fight vigilantly to protect. According to the U.S. Flag Code, the American flag represents a living nation and is considered a "living thing." To show respect, be sure to follow flag etiquette and properly hang the American flag.

Rules and Etiquette

The flag is typically flown from sunrise to sundown. Raise the flag quickly and lower it ceremoniously. The flag should be allowed to flow freely. Never let the flag touch the ground or water below. Always be sure the canton, or union, is at the peak. An upside-down union represents a nation in distress.

Illuminating the flag.

If properly illuminated, the American flag may be flown 24 hours a day. Designate a spotlight specifically to illuminate the flag. It should be bright enough that the flag is recognizable to observers.

Flag etiquette.

If other flags will be the same halyard, the American flag should always be at the peak. If other flags are on adjacent staffs, the American flag should be raised and lowered first. Never place another flag above or to the right of the American flag. Flags from other nations should be flown at the same level and to the left of the American flag. When flying with flags from other states and localities, the American flag should be in the center at the highest point. When hanging the flag indoors, the union should be at the top and to the flag's right. The right of the flag is considered a sign of peace.

Follow half-staff rules.

The American flag should be flown at half-staff until noon on Memorial Day and by presidential or governor order only. Raise the flag to the peak momentarily and then lower it to half-staff. To lower the flag at sunset, again raise it to the peak momentarily and then lower it as usual. Days the American flag should be flown at half-staff:

- May 15th - Peace Officers Memorial Day
- Last Monday in May - Memorial Day (half-staff until noon only, then raise to the top of the staff.)
- July 27th – Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
- September 11th – Patriot Day
- December 7th - Pearl Harbor Day

Check the condition of your flag.

Flying a torn and tattered flag is considered disrespectful to our nation. Check your flag often for signs of wear. Flags may be repaired and washed or dry-cleaned, depending on the material. If a flag is no longer serviceable, dispose of it in the proper way. Contact a local chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or the American Legion for assistance. Many chapters conduct disposal-of-unserviceable-flag ceremonies.

Observe Flag-Flying Days

If not flying the American flag on a daily basis, the U.S. Flag Code designates 17 specific days it urges to fly the flag, in addition to state holidays and specific dates that may be proclaimed by the President of the United States.

The flag can be displayed on all days, but in particular it should be flown on:

- January 1, New Year's Day
- January 20, Inauguration Day
- 3rd Monday in January, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
- February 12, Lincoln's Birthday
- 3rd Monday in February, Washington's birthday
- Easter Sunday
- 2nd Sunday in May, Mother's Day
- 3rd Saturday in May, Armed Forces Day
- Last Monday in May, Memorial Day (half-staff until Noon)
- June 14, Flag Day
- July 4, Independence Day
- 1st Monday in September, Labor Day
- September 17, Constitution Day
- October 27, Navy Day
- November 11, Veteran's Day
- 4th Thursday in November, Thanksgiving Day
- December 25, Christmas Day
- Other days as proclaimed by the President of the United States
- The birthdays of the States (date of admission). Connecticut's date of admission is January 9th.
- State Holidays (Check <http://www.theholidayschedule.com/connecticut-state-holidays.php> for the latest list of Connecticut state holidays.)

Residential American Flag Hanging Etiquette

Touching the ground.

The rule that most Americans are probably familiar with is the guideline that the flag should never touch the ground, and that applies to residential flag displays as well. In all settings, allowing the U.S. flag to touch the ground is a sign of disrespect. Likewise, residential flags should never be tipped or lowered in deference to an individual or flown upside down unless it is a signal of "extreme distress."

Instructions for times of mourning.

Residential flag displays follow the same rules as public displays. Individuals should lower their flag to half-mast in response to a presidential or gubernatorial proclamation or upon receiving news of the death of a President, Vice President or former President or Vice President. Many residential flag poles cannot be lowered. In this case, a black streamer the length of the flag should be attached right below the spearhead so that it flies above the flag itself.

When to fly the flag.

Residential flags should be flown from sunrise to sunset and only during times of decent weather. Residential flags can be flown at night if they are properly illuminated.

Flag placement.

Not all residential flags can be flown on flag poles. If displaying a flag on a wall or in a window, the union (blue part) should be top left from the observer's point of view. No flags should be placed above the American flag. Should two different flags be displayed on crossed staffs, such as a table setting or decoration, the American flag is to its right (observers left), and its staff should be on top of the other flag.

Flag size.

Most residential flags are either 3 feet by 5 feet or 4 feet by 6 feet. The flag pole determines the appropriate size for a residential flag. The length of the flag should be one quarter of the size of the pole.

Displaying the American Flag



When suspended from a rope extending from the building on a pole, the flag should be hoisted out, union first from the building.

When the U.S. Flag is displayed other than from a staff, it should be flat, so that its folds fall free. When displayed over a street, place the union so it faces north or east, depending upon the direction of the street.

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

When flying the flag from a vehicle, attach it to the antenna or clamp the flagstaff to the right fender (or window.)



Arrange the flag appropriately in relation to other flags. When flags of two or more *nations* are displayed, they must 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 a time of peace.



When displayed with another flag against a wall from crossed staffs, the U.S. flag should be on its own right (so that when you look at the flags, you see the U.S. flag on the left), and the U.S. flag's staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag.

Displaying the American Flag (cont.)



Place the U.S. flag at the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags of states, localities or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs.



When other flags are flown from the same halyard, the U.S. flag should always be at the peak. When other flags are flown from adjacent staffs, the U.S. flag should be hoisted first and lowered last. No flag may fly above or to the right of the American flag.

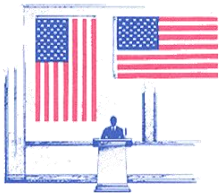
Special Occasions or Ceremonies



The U.S. flag should form a distinctive feature at the ceremony of unveiling a statue or monument, but should never be used as the covering for the statue or monument.



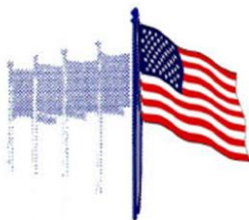
When the flag is displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, it should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the clergy's or speaker's right facing the audience. Any other flag so displayed should be placed on the left of the speaker or to the right of the audience.



Make sure that if the flag is displayed flat against the wall on a speaker's platform, the U.S. flag should be placed above and behind the speaker with the union of the flag in the upper left-hand corner as the audience faces the flag.



Use the flag to cover a casket, but make sure that 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.



When the flag is carried in a procession with another or other flags, it should be either on the marching right (the flag's own right) or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line. **Never display the U.S. flag from a float** except from a staff, or so suspended that its folds fall free as though staffed.

Never Dishonor the Flag

Here are some things to avoid when handling a U.S. flag. **NEVER:**

- Dip it for any person or thing, even though state flags, regimental colors and other flags may be dipped as a mark of honor.
- Display it with the union down, except as a signal of distress.
- Let the flag touch anything beneath it: ground, floor, water, merchandise.
- Fasten or display it in a way that will permit it to be damaged or soiled.
- Place anything on the flag, including letters, insignia, or designs of any kind.
- Use it for holding anything.
- Use it as wearing apparel, bedding or drapery.
- Use it on a costume or athletic uniform (however, a flag patch may be attached to the uniform of patriotic organizations, military personnel, police officers and firefighters).
- Use the flag for advertising or promotion purposes or print it on paper napkins, boxes or anything else intended for temporary use and discard.
- Use it for decoration of any kind. Use bunting of red, white and blue stripes instead.
- Use it for advertising.

Saluting the American Flag

The personal salute may be rendered by the full military hand salute by members of the police, fire departments and military members out of uniform and honorably discharged veteran's military veterans.

Regarding the salute to the US Flag. The US Flag may be dipped to another flag, as on the high seas, to another US Flag or the flag of another nation friendly to the US. The two flags are dipped at the same time, and raised at the same time. State flags, corporate flags, or personal pennants are always dipped, held at the dip until the US Flag returns the dip and is raised. Then the pennant or state flag is raised. The inferior flag should salute the US Flag. The US Flag is not required to salute.

These guidelines are from Section 1 of Title 4 of the United States Code (4 U.S.C. § 1 et seq), but they are completely voluntary. Violating these guidelines for political reasons has been ruled by the Supreme Court to be protected by the First Amendment. There are no fines or penalties if these guidelines are not followed.

In government and military situations, the church flag may be flown above the US Flag during church services.

During a ceremony when hoisting, lowering or when the flag is passing in parade, all persons who choose to respect the flag should face the flag, stand at attention and salute. A man should remove his hat and hold it with the right hand over the heart. Men without hats and women salute by placing the right hand over the heart. The salute to the flag in the moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.

When the flag is worn out or otherwise no longer a fitting emblem for display, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.

Folding the Flag



Have 2 people hold the flag horizontal to the ground.



Fold the flag lengthwise. Pull tight and keep taught.



Then fold the flag lengthwise one more time.



Bring the lower striped corner to the upper edge, forming a triangle at a 90 degree angle.



Fold the upper point 90 degree triangles while assuring the folds are smooth. Then fold the upper point in to form another triangle.



Repeat this procedure until the flag has reached end of the stars.



A finished flag, properly folded, is smooth, taught and squarely stowed.



When you get near the end—nothing but the blue field showing — tuck the last bit into the other folds to secure it.

Flag Folding Ceremony

The ceremony of folding of an American flag may be narrated at special occasions. The following narration is from the United States Air Force Academy and is read aloud as each fold takes place:

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

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For Additional Information:

[When and How to Display the U.S. Flag | Infoplease.com](#)

[The United States Flag: Federal Law Relating to Display and Associated Questions](#)

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