



*How to
honor and display the*

AMERICAN FLAG

THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Nothing evokes such strong emotion as seeing the flag, either a ceremony honoring a great event or draped over a coffin as a sign of mourning for a hero or loved one.

Its unfurled banner, which symbolizes the love and pride that we have as a nation, is a poignant reminder of America's greatness and our fortune to live in a country which values freedom above all else. It signifies the commitment made by our fallen comrades who battled bravely to defend the honor of this sacred emblem - our American unity, our power, and our purpose as a nation. And it exemplifies the devotion of our leaders who continue to uphold its promise of liberty, justice and freedom for all.

Our nation reveres the flag, not out of a sense of unquestioning worship but out of a deep sense of our national heritage. Strengthened by our noble deeds, splendid accomplishments, and untold sacrifices, the flag reflects America's pledge to uphold democracy and work for peace throughout the world. It is America's strength in honor, as dignified in the stars and stripes of the flag, which helps to establish the moral character of our national foundation.

The flag, endearingly referred to as "Old Glory," represents all people of America. We, the people, are America. It is little wonder that the people of America are moved when saluting the flag as it passes by, reminding us that we are a part of this great land. We are "one nation under God."



With Liberty and Justice for All

Even before the American Revolution, flags bearing the familiar red and white stripes, which symbolize the unity of the original 13 colonies of America, began to appear. These stripes were later combined with the British Union Jack to produce the Continental flag that flew over George Washington's headquarters during the siege of Boston.

Almost a year passed after the Declaration of Independence was

signed before a new flag was adopted by the Congress. But variations in the flag were persistent, and changes continued during much of the 19th century. The Flag Act of 1818 fixed the number of horizontal stripes at 13, and gave the President the authority to determine the star arrangement. The now-familiar stars and stripes were not carried into battle by the United States Army until the Mexican War.

Finally, in 1912, an executive order was established which defined the design of the flag, including the star arrangement. Later, when Alaska and Hawaii entered the Union, stars representing those states were added to the flag, adapting the traditional horizontal arrangement.

American involvement in the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II stimulated patriotic sentiments and interest in the flag. In 1942, Congress established rules and customs concerning the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance.

The years since World War II have seen the refinement of various laws and regulations concerning the flag. Today, it has become an accepted part of the decoration of most public buildings and a symbol regarded as appropriate to almost any setting where citizens gather.



Pledge 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."

After first appearing in a copy of the *Youth's Companion* in 1892, as a celebration of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America, the pledge to the flag received the official recognition of Congress on June 22, 1942. The phrase, "under God," was added to the pledge by Congress on June 14, 1954, by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who said that "in this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource in peace and war."

When rendering the pledge of allegiance, persons should stand at attention, face the flag, and, if in uniform, salute, or otherwise place the right hand over the heart. Persons wearing the caps of veterans' service organizations, such as the Disabled American Veterans, are expected to salute. Others, such as Boy or Girl Scouts in uniform, should render respect to the flag in accordance with the traditions of the organization whose uniform they are wearing.

Our National Anthem

The "Star Spangled Banner" has been designated as the national anthem of the United States of America. During the playing of the anthem when the flag is displayed, persons not in uniform should stand at attention facing the flag with their right hand over their heart. Those in uniform should begin saluting the flag at the first note of the music, and hold the salute until the last note of the anthem is played.

Again, this applies to those wearing veterans' organizations caps or the uniforms of other patriotic organizations.

Displaying the Flag



When displaying the flag, it is important to remember certain guidelines of proper flag etiquette. They are:

- When on display or carried in a procession with other flags, the flag should be positioned to its own right. Also, it should be placed to the right of a speaker or staging area, while other flags are placed to the left.
- When the flag is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally from a window sill, balcony, or building, the stars of the flag should be placed at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half staff.



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

- When the flag is displayed either vertically or horizontally against a wall, the stars should be placed at the top of the flag's right and the observer's left.



- When the flag is unfurled for display across a street, it should be hung vertically, with the stars to the north or east.

- When the flag is flown with flags of other nations they are to be displayed from separate staffs of the same height, and each should be of equal size. International law forbids the display of the flag of one nation to be flown above that of another nation during time of peace.



- During a time of national mourning, the flag can be flown at half mast by order or proclamation of the President of the United States. When flown at half mast, the flag should be hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half staff position. The flag should be raised to the peak before it is lowered at the end of the day. On Memorial Day the flag should be displayed at half mast until noon, then raised to the top of the staff and flown until sunset. Local customs regarding the lowering of company, city, or other flags to half mast are directed by the executive officers of those service areas.

- When the flag is used to cover a casket, it should be placed with the stars at the head and over the left shoulder. The flag should not be lowered into the grave or be allowed to touch the ground.

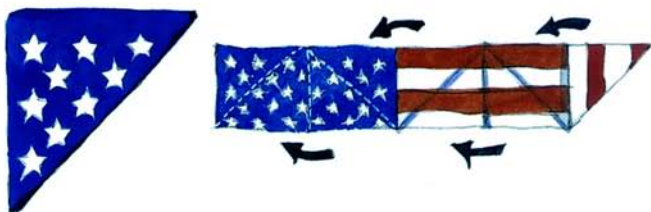


Respect for the Flag

The Flag Code, a national guideline on ways in which the flag is to be respected, states that no disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United States of America. Specific ways in which the flag should not be used, according to the code, are:



- The flag should not be dipped to any person or thing, and can be flown upside down only as a distress signal.
- The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding, or drapery. Bunting of blue, white, and red can be used for covering a speaker's desk, draping the front of a platform, or for decoration in general.
- The flag should never be fastened, displayed, used, or stored in such a way that would allow it to be easily torn, soiled, or damaged.
- The flag should never have any mark, insignia, letter, work, or other designs of any kind placed upon it.
- The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything.
- The flag should never be used for advertising purposes. It should not be embroidered, printed or otherwise impressed on such articles as cushions, handkerchiefs, paper napkins, boxes, or anything that is designed for temporary use. Advertising signs should not be fastened to a flag's staff or halyard.
- No part of the flag should be used as an element of a costume or athletic uniform. However, a flag patch may be worn on the uniform of military personnel, firemen, and members of patriotic or other national organizations, such as the uniforms of veterans' service organizations or Scout uniforms.



When lowering the flag, make certain that no part of it touches the ground. It should be received by waiting hands and arms. To store the flag, ceremoniously fold it length wise in half, then repeat with the blue field on the outside. Finally, while one person holds it by the blue field, another then makes a triangular fold in the opposite end, continuing to fold it in triangles until only the blue shield shows.

When a flag is in such a condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, it should be destroyed in a dignified manner, preferably by burning.

FLYING OUR FLAG

It is proper to display the flag from sunrise to sunset on all days the weather permits. The flag may also be displayed at night if illuminated by a light. But it is even more important to display the flag on national holidays and days of importance, including:

New Year's Day
Inauguration Day
Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday
Lincoln's Birthday
Washington's Birthday
Easter Sunday
Mother's Day
Armed Forces Day
Memorial Day (half staff until noon)
Flag Day
Father's Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Constitution Day
Columbus Day
Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day
Election Days
State and Local Holidays
State Birthday

Other days the flag may be flown at half mast may be proclaimed by the President of the United States.



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