

## The American Flag

The US Flag, is the official flag of the United States of America. This beacon of liberty and freedom has stretched generations for more than 200 years as the one true guiding light to all the people of the world. It is a symbol that many brave people have fought and died for and will continue to fight and die for. Our flag is known by many names, Old Glory, The Stars and Stripes, and The Star Spangled Banner just to name a few. But how did our flag come to exist?

On June 14, 1777, the 2nd Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act. It reads, "Resolved, That the flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation."

Our flag has undergone many transformations since its first design but its meaning has never changed. The flag is still and always will be the visible and tangible symbol of our nation.

Today, the US Flag, is one of the most powerful and recognizable symbols on earth. It represents many things to many people but its most important representation is that of freedom. It symbolizes all that is good in the world through a belief in equal opportunity and religious tolerance.

The US Flag is also representative of liberty and American Exceptionalism. The flag does not represent any political party or philosophy.

Most people in the world have never known or will never know the kind of freedom and liberty that everyday Americans know and enjoy. Many Americans take this liberty for granted and can't even fathom that of a different life where freedom is constrained or even non-existent.

America is the first country in the history of the world where a government and its leaders were created to serve the people. In other cultures and societies throughout history and true to present day, citizens exist to serve their government or their leaders. This is the American Exception, we do not. This is liberty and freedom. This is what the American Flag represents to Americans and the people of the world.

Our country, The United States, exists because our founders put pen to paper and realized that our freedom comes from God and not a king, not a government nor any other person on this planet. Our freedom is a natural right derived from our Creator, God. The US Flag is the symbol of this right.

# The United States Flag Code

## Title 4 - United States Code

### Flag Facts

The United States Flag Code establishes the rules for The US Flag, its care and display.

The US Flag Code is federal law but unlike other laws there is no longer a penalty for breaking this law.

In 1989 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Texas vs. Johnson* that flag burning is protected speech covered under the first amendment.

### The US Flag: 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 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; 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; Father's Day, third Sunday in June; Independence Day, July 4; National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, July 27; 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 (Their date of admission to the Union); 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.

## The US Flag: 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 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 motor car, 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 or the death of a member of the Armed Forces from any State, territory, or possession who dies while serving on active duty, the Governor of that State, territory, or possession may proclaim that the National flag shall be flown at half-staff, and the same authority is provided to the Mayor of the District of Columbia with respect to present or former officials of the District of Columbia and members of the Armed Forces from the District of Columbia. When the Governor of a State, territory, or possession, or the Mayor of the District of Columbia, issues a proclamation under the preceding sentence that the National flag be flown at half-staff in that State, territory, or possession or in the District of Columbia because of the death of a member of the Armed Forces, the National flag flown at any Federal installation or facility in the area covered by that proclamation shall be flown at half-staff consistent with that proclamation. 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:

- **(i)** 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;
- **(ii)** the term "executive or military department" means any agency listed under sections 101 and 102 of title 5, United States Code; and
- **(iii)** 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.

### **The US Flag: 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.

Contact your local VFW or American Legion

These veterans organizations offer proper flag disposal ceremonies.

Contact your local or county municipal office

They may have a flag collection program for a disposal ceremony

Contact your local Boy Scout, Cub Scout or Girl Scout troop or pack.

These organizations regularly hold proper flag disposal ceremonies. If one is not offered they usually will organize one as a service project.

**Never throw a flag away.**

### **The US Flag: 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 in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries present should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.

### **The US Flag: 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.