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U.S. FLAG

REGULATIONS & ETIQUETTE

A GUIDE TO THE OFFICIAL RULES FOR DISPLAYING,
MAINTAINING, AND DISPOSING OF THE U.S. FLAG.



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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL DISPLAY



REGULATIONS & ETIQUETTE

GENERAL DISPLAY



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1. When the flag of the United States of America is displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union (stars) should be uppermost and to the flag's own right (left, to the observer). When displayed in a window, the flag should be hung in the same way, with the union to the left, as viewed from the street.

No other flag or pennant should be placed above, or, if on the same level, to the right (the flag's own right) of the flag of the United States of America, except during church services conducted by naval chaplains at sea for personnel of the Navy. On such occasions, a church pennant may be flown above the flag.

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, except at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York City. Here it is standard practice to display 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.



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2. 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.



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3. When 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 own right (left to the observer).

REGULATIONS & ETIQUETTE

GENERAL DISPLAY CONTINUED

4. When the flag of the United States of America is displayed with another flag against a wall from crossed staffs, it should be positioned on the left (the flag's own right), with its staff in front of the staff of the other flag.



4



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5. The flag of the United States of America should be at the center and at the highest point of a flag grouping: when a number of flags of states or localities or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs.

6. 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.



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CHAPTER TWO

OUTDOOR DISPLAY



REGULATIONS & ETIQUETTE

OUTDOOR DISPLAY

- When the flag of the United States of America is displayed from a staff projecting from a window, balcony, or a building, the union (stars) should be at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half staff.
- When the flag is displayed from the same flagpole with another flag - of a state, community, society or Scout unit - the flag of the United States must always be at the top, except that a church pennant may be flown above the flag during services for Navy personnel when conducted by a Naval chaplain on a ship at sea.
- When the flag is displayed over a street, it should be hung vertically, with the union to the north or east. If the flag is suspended over a sidewalk, the flag's union should be farthest from the building.
- When flown with flags of states, communities, or societies on separate flagpoles which 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, the observer's left.
 - ..The other flags may be smaller but none may be larger.
 - ..No other flag should be placed above the flag of the United States.
 - ..The flag of the United States is always the first to be raised and the last to be lowered.
- When the flag is flown with national flags of other countries, each flag must be displayed from a separate pole of the same height. Each flag should be the same size. They should be raised and lowered simultaneously. The flag of one nation may not be displayed above that of another nation.



Patriotic displays of a series of U.S. flags are found all across the United States. This one is in downtown Boston, MA. Photo by: Edward Jacoby

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THE AMERICAN FLAG IS THE MOST
RECOGNIZED SYMBOL OF FREEDOM
AND DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD.

- VIRGINIA FOXX

CHAPTER THREE

RAISING & LOWERING THE FLAG



REGULATIONS & ETIQUETTE

RAISING & LOWERING THE FLAG

- The flag should be raised briskly and lowered slowly and ceremoniously. Ordinarily it should be displayed only between sunrise and sunset. It should be illuminated if displayed at night.
- The flag of the United States of America is saluted as it is hoisted and lowered. The salute is held until the flag is unsnapped from the halyard or through the last note of music, whichever is the longest.
- To salute, all persons come to attention. Those in uniform give the appropriate formal salute. Citizens not in uniform salute by placing their right hand over the heart. Hats should be removed and held towards the left shoulder with the right hand positioned over the heart. Members of organizations in formation salute upon command of the person in charge.



CHAPTER FOUR

INDOOR DISPLAY



REGULATIONS & ETIQUETTE

INDOOR DISPLAY



Photo by: Tony Fischer @ Flickr.com

- When on display, the flag of the United States of America is accorded the place of honor, always positioned to its own right (left to the observer). From any staged platform when looking out to an audience the flag should be placed to the speakers right with all other flags to the left.
- The flag of the United States should be at the center and at the highest point when a number of flags of states, localities, or societies are grouped for display.
- When one flag is used with the flag of the United States and the staffs are crossed, the flag of the United States is placed on its own right (left of the observer) with its staff in front of the other flag's staff.
- When displaying the flag against a wall, vertically or horizontally, the flag's union (stars) should be at the top, to the flag's own right.

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SURE I WAVE THE AMERICAN FLAG. DO YOU KNOW A BETTER FLAG TO WAVE? SURE I LOVE MY COUNTRY WITH ALL HER FAULTS. I'M NOT ASHAMED OF THAT, NEVER HAVE BEEN, NEVER WILL BE.

- JOHN WAYNE

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FLAG IN MOURNING



REGULATIONS & ETIQUETTE

THE FLAG IN MOURNING

- To place the flag at half staff, hoist it to the peak for an instant and lower it to a position half way between the top and bottom of the staff. The flag is to be raised again to the peak for a moment before it is lowered. On Memorial Day the flag is displayed at half staff until noon and at full staff from noon to sunset.
- The flag is to be flown at half staff in mourning for designated, principal government leaders and upon presidential or gubernatorial order.
- When used to cover a casket, the flag should be placed with the union at the head and over the left shoulder. It should not be lowered into the grave.



THE AMERICAN FLAG, OLD GLORY, STANDING TALL AND FLYING FREE OVER AMERICAN SOIL FOR 228 YEARS IS THE SYMBOL OF OUR BELOVED COUNTRY. IT IS RECOGNIZED FROM NEAR AND AFAR, AND MANY LIVES HAVE BEEN LOST DEFENDING IT.

- JEFF MILLER

CHAPTER SIX

MAINTENANCE AND DISPOSAL OF THE FLAG



REGULATIONS & ETIQUETTE

MAINTENANCE & DISPOSAL OF THE FLAG

What is flag retirement?

Flag retirement is the term used to define the proper, dignified way of destroying United States flags that are no longer fit to serve the nation.

How badly damaged does a flag need to be before it should be retired?

It is in the eye of the beholder to determine the condition of a flag. Often a flag only needs cleaning to restore its original appearance. Flags can be machine-washed in cold water with a mild detergent. They should be laid flat or hung to dry. Never fold the flag when it is damp.

It is recommended that you mend a tattered flag at early signs of wear, if possible. The first part of a flag to show wear is usually the fly end, the outer edge of the flag where hems or seams have begun to unravel due to stress from the wind. If the flag appears too tattered for repair, then the flag should be retired.

What is the preferred way to destroy old, worn, frayed and/or faded U.S. Flags?

The preferred way to destroy old, worn, frayed and/or faded U.S. Flags is by burning them.

Isn't burning the flag an act of desecration and a sign of rebellion?

No. Throughout history, burning or cremation has long been considered a dignified way of paying respect to the deceased and to objects worthy of veneration. Burning has been applied to flag retirement to offer the most reverent method of final tribute.

Can anyone retire a U.S. Flag?

The Flag Code does not authorize any particular organization with the duty of retiring unfit flags. Any one person or group can do it.

Where and how should a flag retirement ceremony be performed?

Flags should be retired in private at a non-public location and the ceremony should be a solemn, dignified event.



Is there an official ceremony for retiring flags?

No. There is no one official ceremony.

My municipality prohibits open fires and/or the burning of flags. What can I do?

If you live in such a community, you will need to find an organization that provides flag retirement services. Contact your local government for information regarding such organizations.

Another option is to separate the blue starfield from the stripes and then to separate the stripes from each other. Once this is done the material is no longer a flag and the pieces may be respectfully disposed of.

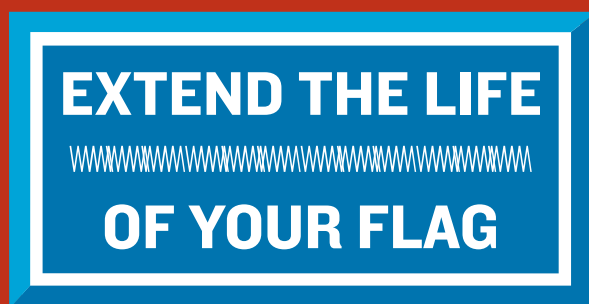
Is it permissible to cut up the American flag?

Yes. Some organizations even recommend cutting the flags into smaller pieces before placing them in the incinerator or on the fire. When doing this, please keep the union of blue intact. Doing so symbolizes that the unity of our union should never be broken.

Precautions:

When burning flags made of synthetic fibers, be aware that they may burn quickly, drip melted fabric, and emit noxious gases into the air. Handle such flags with care.

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