

Care of Your Flag

The life of your flag depends on your care. Dirt can cut fabrics, dull colors, and cause wear. Most outdoor flags can be washed in mild detergent and thoroughly rinsed. Indoor and parade flags should be dry-cleaned. Many dry cleaners offer free cleaning of U.S. flags during the months of June and July. Damaged flags can be repaired and utilized as long as the overall dimensions are not noticeably altered. American Legion Posts and local governments often have facilities to dispose of unserviceable flags. Pole care is also related to flag care. Rust and scale cause permanent stains and some metallic oxides actually eat holes in fabric.

Folding the Flag

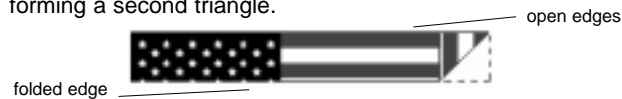
Two persons, facing each other, hold the flag waist high and horizontally between them.

The lower striped section is folded, lengthwise, over the blue field. Hold bottom to top and edges together securely.

Fold the flag again, lengthwise, folded edge to open edge.

A triangular fold is started along the length of the flag, from the end to the heading by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to meet the open edge.

The outer point is turned inward parallel with the open edge, forming a second triangle.



Repeat the triangular folding until the entire length of the flag is folded.

When the flag is completely folded only the triangular blue field should be visible.

Obtaining a Flag Flown Over the Capitol

You can arrange to purchase very nice flags that have been flown over the State or National Capitol by getting in touch with your Senator or Representative. A certificate accompanies each flag.

Web URLs for Flag Information

www.usscouts.org/flag
www.usflag.org
www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/misc/ourflag/titlepage

What do the colors of the flag mean?

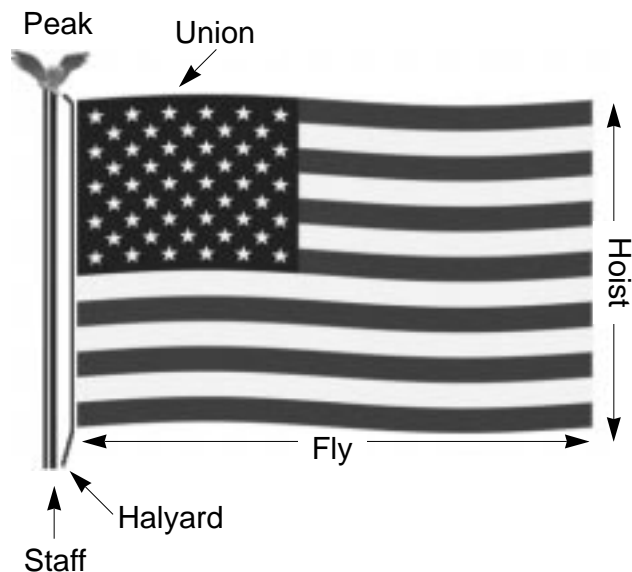
From the book "Our Flag" published in 1989 by the House of Representatives...

"On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress passed a resolution authorizing a committee to devise a seal for the United States of America ... Even colors have specific meanings. The colors red, white, and blue did not have meanings for The Stars and Stripes when it was adopted in 1777. However, the colors in the Great Seal did have specific meanings. Charles Thompson, Secretary of the Continental Congress, reporting to Congress on the Seal, stated:



"The colors of the pales (the vertical stripes) are those used in the flag of the United States of America; White signifies purity and innocence, Red, hardiness & valour, and Blue, the color of the Chief (the broad band above the stripes) signifies vigilance, perseverance & justice." The following passage is from a book about the flag published in 1977 by the House of Representatives...

"The star is a symbol of the heavens and the divine goal to which man has aspired from time immemorial; the stripe is symbolic of the rays of light emanating from the sun."



United States Flag Etiquette

presented by

Cub Scout Pack 73, Boy Scouts of America Andover, Massachusetts



Flag Laws and Regulations

The laws relating to the flag of the United States of America are found in detail in the United States Code. Presented here in part, are sections and items from the United States Code, Title 36, Chapter 10 pertaining to patriotic customs and observances. The full code can be found on many web sites using the key word searches Flag Laws etiquette, United States Code Title 36 Chapter 10.

Title 36, Chapter 10 Patriotic Customs

§171. National anthem; Star-Spangled Banner,

During rendition of the national anthem when the flag is displayed, all present except those in uniform should stand at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. Men not in uniform should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should render the military salute at the first note of the anthem and retain this position until the last note. When the flag is not displayed, those present should face toward the music and act in the same manner they would if the flag were displayed there.

§172. Pledge of Allegiance; manner of delivery

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform men should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute.

§174. 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 flagstaves in the open. However, when a patriotic effect is desired, the flag may be displayed twenty-four 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.

§175. 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 there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.

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 motorcar, 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. 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

§176. Respect for the 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 covering for a ceiling.

g) The flag should never be 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.

§177. Conduct during hoisting, lowering, passing

During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, all persons present except those in uniform should face the flag and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart. Those present in uniform should render the military salute. When not in uniform, men should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Aliens should stand at attention. The salute to the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.