

Americanism Program October 2020-2021

Displaying the U.S. Flag: Education and Etiquette

A large part of Americanism and demonstrating the patriotic spirit is properly caring for and displaying the U.S. Flag. Flag etiquette covers everything from proper display of our Flag to acceptable conduct around this symbol of our nation.

Background

Public concern and confusion regarding the proper respect shown to the United States Flag has given rise to many questions on the law relating to the Flag's handling, display, and use. Both state and federal governments have enacted legislation on this subject. The information listed below can be found in the U.S. Flag Code.

Displaying the Flag

- On Same Staff – U.S. Flag at peak, above any other flag.
- Grouped – U.S. Flag goes to its own right. Flags of other nations are flown at same height.
- Marching – U.S. Flag to marchers right (observer's left).
- On Speaker's Platform – When displayed with a speaker's platform, it must be above and behind the speaker. If mounted on a staff it is on the speaker's right.
- Over a Street – Union (stars) face north or east depending on the direction of the street.
- Half Staff – On special days, the flag may be flown at half-staff. On Memorial Day it is flown at half-staff until noon and then raised.

Time and Occasions for Display

- It is 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.
- The Flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all-weather Flag is displayed.
- The Flag should be displayed daily on or near the main administration building of every public institution.
- The Flag should be displayed in or near every polling place on election days.
- The Flag should be displayed during school days in or near every schoolhouse.

The Flag should be displayed every day, and especially on the following days:

- New Year's Day, January 1
- Inauguration Day, January 20
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday (observed), the third Monday in January
- Lincoln's Birthday, February 12;
- Washington's Birthday (observed), third Monday in February
- National Vietnam War Veterans Day, March 29
- Easter Sunday (variable)
- Loyalty Day, May 1
- 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
- Patriot Day, September 11
- Constitution Day, September 17
- POW/MIA Recognition Day, third Friday in September
- Gold Star Mother's/Family Day, last Sunday in September
- Columbus Day, second Monday in October
- Navy Day, October 27
- Veterans Day, November 11
- Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November
- Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, December 7
- Christmas Day, December 25
- And such other days a may be proclaimed by the President of the United States
- The birthdays of States (date of admission)
- State holidays

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.

Special Rules

- Do not let the flag touch the ground or water.
- Do not fly flag upside down unless there is an emergency.
- Do not carry the flag flat, or carry things in it.
- Do not use the flag as clothing.
- Do not store the flag where it can get dirty.
- Do not use it as a cover.
- Do not fasten it or tie it back. Always allow it to fall free.
- Do not draw on, or otherwise mark the flag.
- If a local school, business or individual has an outstanding Flag display in your community, recognize them with a certificate from the VFW Store. You could also have a Flag retirement ceremony and invite the public to bring their old and/or tattered Flags and participate in the ceremony.

Don't forget the Community instructions from your July Program. That plays well with this months Program. (Notice that I did not repeat it. You need to print these, keep the handy and reference them, to make sure you are doing all you need to do, to fulfill your Americanism Chairman obligations.)

For more information about Flag etiquette, the history of our Flag and to read the U.S. Flag Code, visit www.vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette. I encourage you to share the above information with members of your Auxiliary.

Thank you, for all that you do to assist veterans and their families. Remember, if we **FOCUS**, we are “**Fulfilling Our Commitment of Unwavering Support**”.

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