



The American Flag

Memorial Day, celebrated the last Monday in May, is set aside to honor service men and women who have sacrificed their life for our nation. Flag Day, June 14th, commemorates the adoption of the “Stars and Stripes” as the official flag of the United States. Independence Day, observed on July 4th, celebrates the signing of the Declaration of Independence. These three important days to our nation are fast approaching, which puts the American Flag on display front and center. It seems appropriate, and a good time, to refresh our memories on American Flag Etiquette.

Our Emblem

On June 22, 1942, Congress passed a joint resolution, later amended on December 22, 1942, that encompassed what has come to be known as the U.S. Flag Code.

Perhaps the most important guideline involves how citizens should behave around our flag, often referred to as the “Stars and Stripes.” The American flag has been the nation’s emblem for more than 200 years.

Members of the armed services and veterans are asked to stand at attention and salute when the flag they sacrificed for passes in a parade or is hoisted or lowered. Civilians should stand at attention, face the flag, and place their right hand over their heart

Guidelines for Displaying the Flag:

- When the flag is hung vertically on a wall, window, or door, the Union (blue section) should be to the observer’s left. When the flag is hung either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the Union should be to the observer’s left.
- In a procession, the American flag should be to the right (the flag’s own right) of any other flag or, if in a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.
- When displayed from a staff projecting from a building, the union should be at the peak of the staff.
- When the flag is displayed otherwise than by being flown from a staff, it should be displayed flat, whether indoors or out; or so suspended that its folds fall as freely as though the flag were staffed.
- When displayed over a street, the flag 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.
- On a platform, the flag should be above and behind the speaker, with the union uppermost and to the observer’s left.
- When displayed from a staff in a church or auditorium, the flag should occupy the position of honor and be placed at the speaker’s right as he faces the audience.
- When the flag is used to cover a casket, the union should be at the head and over the left shoulder.
- It should never be subjected to inclement weather.

When to Display the Flag

The flag may be displayed on any day, but especially on:

New Year's Day, January 1

Inauguration Day, January 20

Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, third Monday in January

Presidents' Day, third Monday in February; formerly Washington's Birthday,

Easter Sunday

Mother's Day, second Sunday in May

Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May

Memorial Day (flown at half-staff until noon), on the last Monday in May

Flag Day, June 14

Father's Day, third Sunday in June

Independence Day, July 4

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

Additionally, the flag is flown on other days proclaimed by the President, state birthdays (date of admission) and on state holiday. The flag should be displayed at every public institution and in or near every polling place on election days, and at schoolhouses during school days.

Proper Flag Disposal

When the flag is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem, it should be destroyed in a dignified and ceremonious fashion, preferably by burning. **American Legion** and **VFW** posts will often conduct an annual flag retirement ceremony, which is typically on or about Flag Day (June 14) to dispose of old or worn flags. Additionally, the Boy or Girl Scout troops may conduct flag retirement ceremonies.

[Download Flag Etiquette PDFS](#)

**This information was provided by the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR). Both SAR and Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) are dedicated to promoting patriotism and honoring those who have served and are serving our country. If you have interest in learning more about these great organizations or becoming a member, contact Bob Watson at:

Beaglebud@satx.rr.com or visit the San Antonio SAR chapter web site:

<https://www.txssar.org/SanAntonio/>.