

History of American Flag.



For more than 200 years, the American flag has been the symbol of our nation's strength and unity. It's been a source of pride and inspiration for millions of citizens. And the [American Flag](#) has been a prominent icon in our national history. Here are the highlights of its unique past.

On January 1, 1776, the Continental Army was reorganized in accordance with a Congressional resolution which placed American forces under George Washington's control. On that New Year's Day the Continental Army was laying siege to Boston which had been taken over by the British Army. Washington ordered the Grand Union flag hoisted above his base at Prospect Hill. It had 13 alternate red and white stripes and the British Union Jack in the upper left-hand corner (the canton).

In May of 1776, Betsy Ross reported that she sewed the first American flag.

On June 14, 1777, in order to establish an official flag for the new nation, the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act: "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."

Between 1777 and 1960, Congress passed several acts that changed the shape, design and arrangement of the flag and allowed for additional stars and stripes to be added to reflect the admission of each new state.

- Act of January 13, 1794 - provided for 15 stripes and 15 stars after May 1795.
- Act of April 4, 1818 - provided for 13 stripes and one star for each state, to be added to the flag on the 4th of July following the admission of each new state, signed by President Monroe.
- Executive Order of President Taft dated June 24, 1912 - established proportions of the flag and provided for arrangement of the stars in six horizontal rows of eight each, a single point of each star to be upward.
- Executive Order of President Eisenhower dated January 3, 1959 - provided for the arrangement of the stars in seven rows of seven stars each, staggered horizontally and vertically.
- Executive Order of President Eisenhower dated August 21, 1959 - provided for the arrangement of the stars in nine rows of stars staggered horizontally and eleven rows of stars staggered vertically.

Today the flag consists of thirteen horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with 6 white. The stripes represent the original 13 colonies; the stars represent the 50 states of the Union. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well: Red symbolizes Hardiness and Valor, White symbolizes Purity and Innocence and Blue represents Vigilance, Perseverance and Justice.

American Flag Etiquette



Federal law stipulates many aspects of flag etiquette. The section of law dealing with American Flag etiquette is generally referred to as the Flag Code. Some general guidelines from the Flag Code answer many of the most common questions:

- The flag should be lighted at all times, either by sunlight or by an appropriate light source.
- The flag should be flown in fair weather, unless the flag is designed for inclement weather use.
- The flag should never be dipped to any person or thing. It is flown upside down only as a distress signal.
- The flag should not be used for any decoration in general. Bunting of blue, white and red stripes is available for these purposes. The blue stripe of the bunting should be on the top.
- The flag should never be used for any advertising purpose. It should not be embroidered, printed or otherwise impressed on such articles as cushions, handkerchiefs, napkins, boxes, or anything intended to be discarded after temporary use. Advertising signs should not be attached to the staff or halyard.
- The flag should not be used as part of a costume or athletic uniform, except that a flag patch may be used on the uniform of military personnel, fireman, policeman and members of patriotic organizations.
- The flag should never have any mark, insignia, letter, word, number, figure, or drawing of any kind placed on it, or attached to it.
- The flag should never be used for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything.
- When the flag is lowered, no part of it should touch the ground or any other object; it should be received by waiting hands and arms. To store the flag it should be folded neatly and ceremoniously.
- The flag should be cleaned and mended when necessary.
- When a flag is so worn it is no longer fit to serve as a symbol of our country, it should be destroyed by burning in a dignified manner.

Rules for Display of the American Flag

Display Outdoors

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.

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. By "half-staff" is meant lowering the flag to one-half the distance between the top and bottom of the staff. Crepe streamers may be affixed to spear heads or flagstaves in a parade only by order of the President of the United States.

Flown on the Same Halyard with Non-Nation Flags

The American Flag 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 right of the flag of the United States.

Suspended Over a Sidewalk

The flag may be suspended 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.

From a Staff Projecting Horizontally or at an Angle

The flag may be projected from the window sill, balcony, or front of a building, with the union of the flag placed at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half-staff.

In a Parade with Other Flags

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.

With Non-National Flags

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.

With Other National Flags

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.

With Another Flag Against a Wall from Crossed Staffs

Should be on the right, the flag's own right which is the viewer's left, and its staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag.

Display Indoors

From a Staff in a Church or Public Auditorium on a Podium

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 (to the right of the audience).

From a Staff in a Church or Public Auditorium off the Podium

Custom and not the flag code hold that the flag of the United States of America should hold the position of superior prominence as part of the audience, in the position of honor at the audience's right.

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.

Other than being Flown from a Staff

The flag should be displayed flat, whether indoors or out. 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 it should be displayed in the same way, that is with the union or blue field to the left of the observer in the street. When festoons, rosettes or drapings are desired, bunting of blue, white and red should be used, but never the flag.

Folding the American Flag

How to fold an American Flag The National Flag Foundation presents its own special flag folding ceremony, incorporating several of the virtues attributed to the colors of the Flag as specified in 1782 by Charles Thomson, then Secretary of Congress. The National Flag Foundation recommends that this ceremony be read prior to the actual folding of the flag.



Symbols for the folds of the Flag

First: The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.

Second: The second fold is a symbol of eternal life.

Third: The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks and who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.



Fourth: The fourth fold represents our weaker nature; for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance.

Fifth: The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right, but it is still our country, right or wrong."



Sixth: The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Seventh: The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all enemies, whether they be found within our without the boundaries of our republic.



Eighth: The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of the day, and to honor our mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.



Ninth: The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood, for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.

Tenth: The tenth fold is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since he or she was first born.



Eleventh: The eleventh fold, in the eyes of Hebrew citizens, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.



Twelfth: The twelfth fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost.

National motto: When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God We Trust." After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington and the sailors and marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today.

Pack 909 Flag Ceremony for Indoor Pack Meetings

Setup: The flag post are stationed in front of the stage at the head of the audience. The color guard is stationed to the rear of the room. The seats should be positioned far enough apart to allow at least four boys to walk side by side down the isle. The boys will stand in a row facing the stage. The flag bearers should stand in the center of the row, with the Pack flag bearer on the left as you are facing the stage and the US flag bearer will be on the right. The 'Leader of the Guard' the boy verbally leading the presentation, should stand center stage in front of the audience. When the boys are called forward, they should act reverent to the flag and walk at attention. Just before reaching the front, the Flag Bearers will cross so that the US flag is on the left, AS YOUR FACING THE STAGE, and the Pack Flag on the Right. The guard will stand evenly either side of the flags silently and at attention, facing the crowd. The Leader will give the following commands.

1) Audience Please Rise for the Presentation of the Colors

2) Color Guard Advance

3) Color Guard Post the colors

4) Please bow your head for the invocation,

A scout is Reverent,

Dear lord,

Thank you for this time, that we can be together as Cubscouts,

Thank you for this place that we meet,

Help us to learn the Cub Scouting way,

And appreciate the gifts we have,

Amen...

5) Cubscout Salute

6) Please join me in saying the "Pledge of Allegiance"

I pledge allegiance to the flag,

Of the United States of America,

And to the Republic for which it stands,

One nation, under God,

Indivisible, with Liberty, and Justice for all.

7) Color Guard, Retire. (Dismissed)