



# The American Flag Foundation, Inc.

The National Flag represents the living country and is considered to be a living thing emblematic of the respect and pride we have for our nation. Display it proudly.

UNITED STATES CODE  
TITLE 36  
CHAPTER 10 — PATRIOTIC CUSTOMS

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## 170. National anthem; Star-Spangled Banner

The composition consisting of the words and music known as The Star-Spangled Banner is designated the national anthem of the United States of America.

## 171. Conduct during playing

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 to the flag; manner of delivery

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, '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



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all.', 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.

### 173. Display and use of flag by civilians; codification of rules and customs; definition

The following codification of existing rules and customs pertaining to the display and use of the flag of the United States of America is established for the use of such civilians or civilian groups or organizations as may not be required to conform with regulations promulgated by one or more executive departments of the Government of the United States. The flag of the United States for the purpose of this chapter shall be defined according to sections 1 and 2 of title 4 and Executive Order 10834 issued pursuant thereto.

### 174. Time and occasions for display

- (a) Display on buildings and stationary flag staffs in open; night display It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flag staffs 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) Manner of hoisting - The flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously.
- (c) Inclement weather The flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all weather flag is displayed.
- (d) Particular days of display - The flag should be displayed on all days, especially on New Year's Day, January 1; Inauguration Day, January 20; Lincoln's Birthday, February 12; Washington's Birthday, third Monday in February; Easter Sunday (variable); 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; 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; and such other days as may be proclaimed by the President of the United States; the birthdays of States (date of admission); and on State holidays.
- (e) Display on or near administration building of public institutions - The flag should be displayed daily on or near the main administration building of every public institution.
- (f) Display in or near polling places - The flag should be displayed in or near every polling place on election days.
- (g) Display in or near schoolhouses - The flag should be displayed during school days in or near every schoolhouse.



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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.

- (a) The flag should not be displayed on a float in a parade except from a staff, or as provided in subsection (i) of this section.
- (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, except during church services conducted by naval chaplains at sea, when the church pennant may be flown above the flag during church services for the personnel of the Navy. 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: Provided, That nothing in this section shall make unlawful the continuance of the practice heretofore followed of displaying 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 at the headquarters of the United Nations.
- (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.
- (e) 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.
- (f) 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. 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 United States flag's right.
- (g) 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.
- (h) When the flag of the United States is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from the window sill, balcony, or front of a building, the union of the flag should be placed at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half staff. When the flag is suspended over a sidewalk 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.
- (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.



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- (j) When the flag is displayed 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.
- (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.
- (l) The flag should form a distinctive feature of the ceremony of unveiling a statue or monument, but it should never be used as the covering for the statue or monument.
- (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. In the event of the death of other officials or foreign dignitaries, the flag is to be displayed at half-staff according to Presidential instructions or orders, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with law. In the event of the death of a present or former official of the government of any State, territory, or possession of the United States, the Governor of that State, territory, or possession may proclaim that the National flag shall be flown at half-staff. The flag shall be flown at half-staff thirty days from the death of the President or a former President; ten days from the day of death of the Vice President, the Chief Justice or a retired Chief Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives; from the day of death until interment of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, a Secretary of an executive or military department, a former Vice President, or the Governor of a State, territory, or possession; and on the day of death and the following day for a Member of Congress. As used in this subsection -
  - (1) the term 'half-staff' means the position of the flag when it is one-half the distance between the top and bottom of the staff;
  - (2) the term 'executive or military department' means any agency listed under sections 101 and 102 of title 5; and
  - (3) the term 'Member of Congress' means a Senator, a Representative, a Delegate, or the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico.
- (n) When the flag is 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.
- (o) When the flag is suspended across a corridor or lobby in a building with only one main entrance, it should be suspended vertically with the union of the flag to the observer's left upon entering. If the building has more than one main entrance, the flag should be suspended vertically near the center of the corridor or lobby with the union to the north, when entrances are to the east and west or to the east when entrances are to the north and south. If there are entrances in more than two directions, the union should be to the east.



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### 176. 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.

- (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 a covering for a ceiling.
- (g) The flag should never have 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 or passing of flag

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.



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### 178. Modification of rules and customs by President

Any rule or custom pertaining to the display of the flag of the United States of America, set forth herein, may be altered, modified, or repealed, or additional rules with respect thereto may be prescribed, by the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, whenever he deems it to be appropriate or desirable; and any such alteration or additional rule shall be set forth in a proclamation.

### 179. Design for service flag; persons entitled to display flag

The Secretary of Defense is authorized and directed to approve a design for a service flag, which flag may be displayed in a window of the place of residence of persons who are members of the immediate family of a person serving in the armed forces of the United States during any period of war or hostilities in which the Armed Forces of the United States may be engaged.

### 180. Design for service lapel button; persons entitled to wear button

The Secretary of Defense is also authorized and directed to approve a design for a service lapel button, which button may be worn by members of the immediate family of a person serving in the armed forces of the United States during any period of war or hostilities in which the Armed Forces of the United States may be engaged.

181. Approval of designs by Secretary of Defense; license to manufacture and sell; penalties Upon the approval by the Secretary of Defense of the design for such service flag and service lapel button, he shall cause notice thereof, together with a description of the approved flag and button, to be published in the Federal Register. Thereafter any person may apply to the Secretary of Defense for a license to manufacture and sell the approved service flag, or the approved service lapel button, or both. Any person, firm, or corporation who manufactures any such service flag or service lapel button without having first obtained such a license, or otherwise violates sections 179 to 182 of this title, shall, upon conviction thereof, be fined not more than \$1,000.

### 182. Rules and regulations

The Secretary of Defense is authorized to make such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of sections 179 to 182 of this title.

182a to 182d. Repealed. Pub. L. 89-534, § 2, Aug. 11, 1966, 80 Stat. 345

183, 184. Repealed. Pub. L. 85-857, § 14(84), Sept. 2, 1958, 72 Stat. 1272

185. Transferred

### 186. National motto

The national motto of the United States is declared to be 'In God we trust.'

### 187. National floral emblem

The flower commonly known as the rose is designated and adopted as the national floral emblem of the



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United States of America, and the President of the United States is authorized and requested to declare such fact by proclamation.

## 188. National march

The composition by John Philip Sousa entitled 'The Stars and Stripes Forever' is hereby designated as the national march of the United States of America.

## 189. Recognition of National League of Families POW/MIA flag

The National League of Families POW/MIA flag is hereby recognized officially and designated as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation.

Miscellaneous References  
UNITED STATES CODE  
TITLE 4  
CHAPTER 1 - THE FLAG

1. Flag; stripes and stars on - The flag of the United States shall be thirteen horizontal stripes, alternate red and white; and the union of the flag shall be fifty stars, white in a blue field.

2. Same; additional stars - On the admission of a new State into the Union one star shall be added to the union of the flag; and such addition shall take effect on the fourth day of July then next succeeding such admission.

## 3. Use of flag for advertising purposes; mutilation of flag

Any person who, within the District of Columbia, in any manner, for exhibition or display, shall place or cause to be placed any word, figure, mark, picture, design, drawing, or any advertisement of any nature upon any flag, standard, colors, or ensign of the United States of America; or shall expose or cause to be exposed to public view any such flag, standard, colors, or ensign upon which shall have been printed, painted, or otherwise placed, or to which shall be attached, appended, affixed, or annexed any word, figure, mark, picture, design, or drawing, or any advertisement of any nature; or who, within the District of Columbia, shall manufacture, sell, expose for sale, or to public view, or give away or have in possession for sale, or to be given away or for use for any purpose, any article or substance being an article of merchandise, or a receptacle for merchandise or article or thing for carrying or transporting merchandise, upon which shall have been printed, painted, attached, or otherwise placed a representation of any such flag, standard, colors, or ensign, to advertise, call attention to, decorate, mark, or distinguish the article or substance on which so placed shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$100 or by imprisonment for not more than thirty days, or both, in the discretion of the court. The words 'flag, standard, colors, or ensign', as used herein, shall include any flag, standard, colors, ensign, or any picture or representation of either, or of any part or parts of either, made of any substance or represented on any substance, of any size evidently purporting to be either of said flag, stan-



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standard colors, or ensign of the United States of America or a picture or a representation of either, upon which shall be shown the colors, the stars and the stripes, in any number of either thereof, or of any part or parts of either, by which the average person seeing the same without deliberation may believe the same to represent the flag, colors, standard, or ensign of the United States of America.

UNITED STATES CODE  
TITLE 4  
CHAPTER 2 - THE SEAL

41. Seal of the United States

The seal heretofore used by the United States in Congress assembled is declared to be the seal of the United States.

42. Same; custody and use of

The Secretary of State shall have the custody and charge of such seal. Except as provided by section 2902(a) of title 5, the seal shall not be affixed to any instrument without the special warrant of the President therefor.

UNITED STATES CODE  
TITLE 5  
PART III  
CHAPTER 29 - COMMISSIONS, OATHS, RECORDS, AND REPORTS  
SUBCHAPTER I - COMMISSIONS, OATHS, AND RECORDS

2902. Commission; where recorded

(a) Except as provided by subsections (b) and (c) of this section, the Secretary of State shall make out and record, and affix the seal of the United States to, the commission of an officer appointed by the President. The seal of the United States may not be affixed to the commission before the commission has been signed by the President.

UNITED STATES CODE  
TITLE 5 PART I  
CHAPTER 1 - ORGANIZATION

101. Executive departments

The Executive departments are:

The Department of State. The Department of the Treasury. The Department of Defense. The Department of Justice. The Department of the Interior. The Department of Agriculture. The Department of Commerce. The Department of Labor. The Department of Health and Human Services. The Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Department of Transportation. The Department of Energy. The Department of Education. The Department of Veterans Affairs.



102. Military departments

The military departments are:

The Department of the Army. The Department of the Navy. The Department of the Air Force.

UNITED STATES CODE

TITLE 18

Part I. CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

CHAPTER 33 - EMBLEMS, INSIGNIA, AND NAMES

THIS TITLE WAS ENACTED BY ACT JUNE 25, 1948, CH. 645, SEC. 1, 62 STAT. 683

700. Desecration of the flag of the United States; penalties

(a)(1) Whoever knowingly mutilates, defaces, physically defiles, burns, maintains on the floor or ground, or tramples upon any flag of the United States shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both.

(2) This subsection does not prohibit any conduct consisting of the disposal of a flag when it has become worn or soiled.

(b) As used in this section, the term 'flag of the United States' means any flag of the United States, or any part thereof, made of any substance, of any size, in a form that is commonly displayed.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed as indicating an intent on the part of Congress to deprive any State, territory, possession, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico of jurisdiction over any offense over which it would have jurisdiction in the absence of this section.

(d) (1) An appeal may be taken directly to the Supreme Court of the United States from any interlocutory or final judgment, decree, or order issued by a United States district court ruling upon the constitutionality of subsection (a).

(2) The Supreme Court shall, if it has not previously ruled on the question, accept jurisdiction over the appeal and advance on the docket and expedite to the greatest extent possible.



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UNITED STATES CODE  
TITLE 2  
CHAPTER 9A - ORGANIZATION

285b. Functions - The functions of the Office shall be as follows:

(1) To prepare, and submit to the Committee on the Judiciary one title at a time, a complete compilation, restatement, and revision of the general and permanent laws of the United States which conforms to the understood policy, intent, and purpose of the Congress in the original enactments, with such amendments and corrections as will remove ambiguities, contradictions, and other imperfections both of substance and of form, separately stated, with a view to the enactment of each title as positive law.

(2) To examine periodically all of the public laws enacted by the Congress and submit to the Committee on the Judiciary recommendations for the repeal of obsolete, superfluous, and superseded provisions contained therein.

(3) To prepare and publish periodically a new edition of the United States Code (including those titles which are not yet enacted into positive law as well as those titles which have been so enacted), with annual cumulative supplements reflecting newly enacted laws.

(4) To classify newly enacted provisions of law to their proper positions in the Code where the titles involved have not yet been enacted into positive law.

(5) To prepare and submit periodically such revisions in the titles of the Code which have been enacted into positive law as may be necessary to keep such titles current.

(6) To prepare and publish periodically new editions of the District of Columbia Code, with annual cumulative supplements reflecting newly enacted laws, through publication of the fifth annual cumulative supplement to the 1973 edition of such Code.

(7) To provide the Committee on the Judiciary with such advice and assistance as the committee may request in carrying out its functions with respect to the revision and codification of the Federal statutes.