



Test your knowledge of U.S. flag etiquette

Compiled by Richard and Debbie Hadad, the Payson Roundup.

1. True or False: The flag may be flown every day and in any weather condition.
2. True or False: The flag is usually flown from sunrise to sunset.
3. Can the flag be flown at night?
4. We've noted times when the flag can be flown, but when is the flag expected to be flown?
5. What pace do you use when hoisting and lowering the flag?
6. When should a flag be flown at half-staff?
7. What must you do before setting a flag at half-staff, or when lowering a flag from half-staff?
8. On what day do you fly the flag at half-staff until noon, and then hoist it to full-staff?
9. When is the only time a United States flag should be flown upside down?
10. What is the rope or cord on a flagpole called?
11. How many people (minimum) should be used to raise the flag? Why?
12. When the flag has left the arms of the first person, what should he or she do?
13. What is important to remember when flying the US flag with any state or auxiliary flag?
14. What about with other national flags such as at the Olympic games?
15. Should a flag be carried flat during parades?
16. On what side should the flag be placed during a parade if carried with other flags arranged in a row?
17. When is it appropriate to dip the flag in salute during a parade or procession?
18. When displayed on a staff, on what side of the speaker should the flag be placed in a church, synagogue, temple or auditorium?
19. When displayed hanging vertically, what side should the blue field be on?
20. When hung over the center of a street, which direction should the blue field of the flag face?
21. How and when should a flag be disposed of?
22. When does the flag outside the White House not fly?
23. Is it appropriate to wear articles of clothing made with the symbols of the US flag?

ANSWERS

1. True or False: The flag may be flown every day and in any weather condition.

True, as long as it is made of all-weather material.

2. True or False: The flag is usually flown from sunrise to sunset.

True.

3. Can the flag be flown at night?

Yes, but only if it is properly lit.

4. We've noted times when the flag can be flown, but when is the flag expected to be flown?

On all national and state holidays and other days proclaimed by the president.

5. What pace do you use when hoisting and lowering the flag?

Hoist it briskly and lower it slowly.

6. When should a flag be flown at half-staff?

To show sorrow and mourning following a national tragedy, the death of a president or other national or state figure, or to honor those who have sacrificed their lives for their country.

7. What must you do before setting a flag at half-staff, or when lowering a flag from half-staff?

Hoist the flag to the top of the pole, hold it for an instant, and then lower it.

8. On what day do you fly the flag at half-staff until noon, and then hoist it to full-staff?

On Memorial Day.

9. When is the only time a United States flag should be flown upside down?

Only when used as a distress signal to call for help.

10. What is the rope or cord on a flagpole called?

A halyard.

11. How many people (minimum) should be used to raise the flag? Why?

Two. One person holds the flag and prevents it from touching the ground. The other person attaches the flag to the flag line, or halyard.

12. When the flag has left the arms of the first person, what should he or she do?

When the flag is flowing freely, they should step back and salute the flag if in uniform, or place hand over heart, as the other person ties the halyard to the flagpole. It's just the opposite when lowering the flag.

13. What is important to remember when flying the US flag with any state or auxiliary flag?

The US flag should never fly lower than the state flag. It is hoisted first and lowered last.

14. What about with other national flags such as at the Olympic games?

Level with other national flags.

15. Should a flag be carried flat during parades?

This is up for debate. One popular opinion: if the flag is small enough to be flown, it should be allowed to fly freely. Some flags may be too large to be carried aloft during parades and other events. Note: The flag should not be strapped flat, or draped over a vehicle.

16. On what side should the flag be placed during a parade if carried with other flags arranged in a row?

The farthest to its own right, or in front of the center of that line. Note: When flying at equal heights, the US flag should either be out in front, or farthest to its own right.

17. When is it appropriate to dip the flag in salute during a parade or procession?

Never. The US flag should not be dipped in salute to any person or thing.

18. When displayed on a staff, on what side of the speaker should the flag be placed in a church, synagogue, temple or auditorium?

In most cases, the correct answer is on the speaker's right. However, we found several sources explaining how colors are posted differently when placed on a platform (stage) than when placed on the floor. According to one source from Cornell University, when both flag and speaker are on the same level the U.S. flag is placed to the right of the speaker. But when the speaker is on a platform and the flag is to be placed on the floor (or at any point that is lower than the speaker) the U.S. flag is then placed to the left of the speaker.

19. When displayed hanging vertically, what side should the blue field be on?

On the flag's own right.

20. When hung over the center of a street, which direction should the blue field of the flag face?

North, on an east/west street. East, on a north/south street.

21. How and when should a flag be disposed of?

The United States flag should be disposed of in a dignified way, preferable by burning. It should not be flown when tattered and torn, dirty, significantly faded, or when it is no longer a fitting emblem for display.

22. When does the flag outside the White House not fly?

When the president is not in Washington, D.C.

23. Is it appropriate to wear articles of clothing made with the symbols of the US flag?

The US Flag Code specifies, "The US flag should not be made into an article of clothing." This is another area of debate when it comes to flag etiquette. For many veterans, a necktie, hat, or shirt that has red and white stripes and a blue field with white stars is considered disrespectful. An article of clothing that has red, white, and blue stripes, but not stars, is not generally considered to be the U.S. flag, but still conveys the notion of patriotism while adhering to the rules outlining the proper display of the flag.

Again, this suggested etiquette is derived from the idea that the US flag deserves a high level of respect and dignity. Clothing that can be soiled and stained does not convey such respect or dignity.

Note: The flag should also not be used in advertising. It should not be used on napkins, boxes, or anything that is designed for temporary use and discard.

Other interesting facts about the US flag

In 1777 Congress made the resolution that determined the design of the first American flag. (13 stripes - 7 red, 6 white. And 13 stars - but was not specific about the arrangement of the stars. The circle of stars was most common, but other flags included a large star in the center with twelve stars around it. There were many other variations.)

In 1795 Congress voted to increase the number of stars and stripes to 15 as new states joined the union.

In 1818 (23 years later) legislation was enacted to reestablish the number of stripes at 13 and institute the policy of adding a new star upon the admission of every new state.

Colors represent:

White: Purity and Innocence (Liberty)

Red: Hardiness and Valor (Bravery)

Blue: Vigilance, Perseverance and Justice

